

HENRY STEPHENS LIBRARY

43299

PT2625.A435 A413

Alexander, a novel of Utopia



3 7000 0006 4570 2

ALEXANDER



KLAUS  
MANN

# STEPHENS COLLEGE

CLASS

BOOK

LIBRARY



DISCARDED







ALEXANDER



TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY  
MARION SAUNDERS

PUBLISHED 1930 IN NEW YORK  
BY BREWER & WARREN INC.

# ALEXANDER

A NOVEL OF UTOPIA

*Klaus  
Mann*

11

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED INCLUDING THE RIGHT  
TO REPRODUCE THIS BOOK OR ANY PORTION  
THEREOF

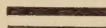
COPYRIGHT 1929 BY S. FISCHER VERLAG A. G. BERLIN;  
COPYRIGHT 1930 BY KLAUS MANN

PT  
2625  
A435  
A413  
COLUMBIA, MO.

TO THE MEMORY OF


*H. S.*

THE ANGEL WITH THE  
BANDAGED HANDS



43299

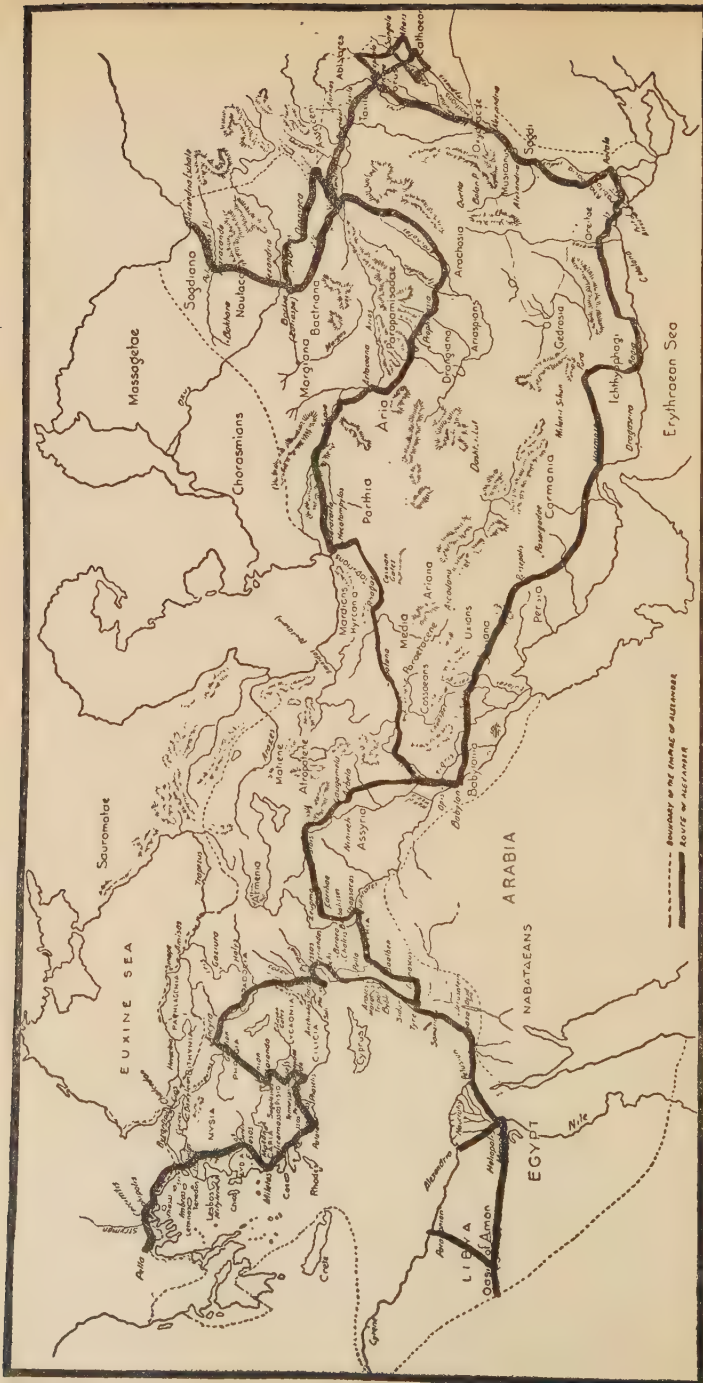




Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2022 with funding from  
Kahle/Austin Foundation

ALEXANDER





# Alexander's Empire

# *Decampment*

## I

There was the sun, there were enchanted animals, and rapidly flowing water. As regards the animals, Alexander knew that in them lived the souls of the departed, and that it was better to touch any little dog and any little donkey very gently, because they might be grandfather reincarnate. The waters of the brooks and mountain streams were also inhabited by beings of a mysterious character, but at the same time so adorable that one could listen to them for hours while they were joking, dancing, and splashing about. Similar beings haunted the trees and bushes, and particularly attractive little ones dwelt in the flowers—that is why one was not allowed to pick them.

Life was absolutely perfect so long as father kept out of the way. This he generally did, and only on festive occasions was he known to talk to the child, when he enjoyed teasing him in his rough way. The child did not cry, he merely looked very closely at his father as the latter roared with laughter, quite unaware of all the hatred and anger in the boy's eyes.

Everything seemed to Alexander to be good, even

his mother's snakes. Only for his father he had no use. Why did father laugh so unpleasantly and get sulky if no one laughed with him? In his presence there was always an odour of sweat and alcohol, in his mother's of herbs and beautiful hair.

There was good Leonidas, who liked to be called a pedagogue, although at best he was only an attendant, however importantly he would clear his throat and throw out his chest. And Landice, his obese and asthmatic nurse, was another good person. How she wobbled along with her loving, perspiring face! She was very comforting and her bosom, which was always heaving up and down in a friendly way, provided a never-failing refuge. Her stories were not as wonderful as mother's, but they went straight to his heart. Landice's stories were about the golden vine with the emerald grapes, about the golden stream and the sun-fountain, about the various adventures, tricks and tomfooleries of the lesser and intermediate gods; she did not dare talk about the more important ones, for she had a sense of reverence.

But when mother was telling stories, one forgot everything else listening to her low, almost growling voice.

Olympias rarely said anything; generally she sat



looking from under a stubbornly lowered brow; this look, which under her long, tapering eyelashes had a mocking depth, was uncanny in its magnetic power; it was at once dreamy and frigid. Her mouth too, was very disquieting, for it was a large mouth with narrow, strongly curved lips, reminiscent of the jaws of a lion at rest. Her hair, which she wore half-long, was shaggy and curly; her hands, which were neglected, slender and bony, also had something savage about them, suggestive of the claws of a beast of prey. Many considered the Queen very stupid, others again thought her mentally deficient. She was quite unsusceptible of logical considerations, being obstinately dogmatic to the point of blindness. As she had been known suddenly to fly into a rage and become very cruel, no one dared to contradict her; those who did, however, knew how their faces had smarted under her strong hand. Even Philip had some experience of these well-aimed blows.

Generally she was silent and sat brooding, sometimes murmuring drearily that she was tired. The whole Court debated with what powers she held midnight trafficking. Why was she so exhausted during the day? Because at night she conjured up the most evil spirits and conversed with them. That was more in-

decent than if she had deceived Philip by consorting with a mortal man. Egyptian priests and Babylonian magicians had initiated her into the most scandalous cults; even about Orpheus and Dionysius she knew decidedly more than was seemly. What did she do with the many snakes which lay in a little basket at her bed-side?—There was no end to the gossip about this.

In the evening, when she was in a better temper, she sent for young Prince Alexander. She kissed him and strained him wildly to her; inhaling the stupefying odour of her hair, he turned dizzy. She looked up at him in a sentimental and mocking way, and then immediately began to tell him stories, interrupting her narrative with horrible chuckles and raising her bony hand aimlessly to her brow.

Again and again she had to tell the story of Orpheus whom the Maenads tore limb from limb. They cut him up into little pieces because they all loved him and were drunk, whereas he could not bear any woman since the loss of his Eurydice. It was the nine Muses who gathered up the bloody fragments of his body and buried them on a beautiful hill.—With her growling voice Olympias sang all the songs about Orpheus,—and her child would then feel more solemn

than when saying his prayers. She hummed and she growled, swaying her head with its unruly crop of hair to and fro; if Alexander cried, she still continued to hum and to growl. "It is the harmony that makes you weep," she said dreamily informative. "I wept in just that way over the vorticist orbs of the planets when I was a child."

Somehow related to the story of Orpheus, but still more mysterious in its way, was the Egyptian fairy-tale of the god-like King Osiris, who was killed by his cunning and wicked brother Typhon. His method was cruel and complicated. For he expressly ordered a box to be constructed which was to have the noble measurements of Osiris. He then pretended he was trying out a game with his friends among whom was his unsuspecting brother; its senselessness must have seemed extraordinary: everyone in turn was to lie down in the box until the right person would fit into it. Naturally no one fitted into it but Osiris over whose head the lid was at once fastened. They threw him into the river, the brutes, so that his corpse should float out to sea. Isis, his sweetheart, sister and mother, who was ardently searching for him, at once found him where he had been washed up onto the wooded bank. She tended, adorned and fondled the poor body

of her sweet spouse, but hardly had she left him to see after her little son Horus than Typhon took possession of the royal corpse and cut it up into fourteen parts.

Mysteriously mixed up with the story of the kingly god Osiris was that of Tammuz, whose glory had been in Babylon; also the story of the beautifully formed Adonis, who was well known in Asia Minor. All these shed their blood, and they were all lamented by the mother-sweetheart whose name was Isis, Ichtar, Astarte, or Cybele.

"And God shall be killed," said the Queen, concluding her fairy stories with voluptuous cruelty, laughing fearfully and raising her hand aimlessly to her brow.

Alexander listened to her words with fearful interest; he began to dream about the dismembered bodies. With great cunning and calculation Olympias aroused in him such dread and fear that his teeth began to chatter; the effect of the sequel was all the more wonderful. For the dismemberment of the god was the necessary condition for the wonder of his resurrection; the calamity had to be of some magnitude for the subsequent rejoicing to be endless.

Did the women weep never so long for their

Tammuz-Adonis, beating their breasts, he would return and reveal himself to them in his second and real existence.—Olympias seized the wrists of her son as he trembled with fear, and together they gazed on the bloody fragments of the torn body which seemed still to be showing signs of life. Now they even began to weep, uniting themselves to the swaying and lamenting women in their voiceless, but importunate song of woe. Their eyes blinded with tears, they stared fixedly at the spot where the dead man lay in his blessed blood; they sang, sobbing and swaying to and fro as in a dance. Only after a long period of weeping and beating their breasts did they enter into their heritage: the lost finally returned to life; the dismembered man stood forth in great glory, his was the splendour, and the power, and all majesty.

It was thus that Demeter rejoiced each year when her lost daughter came back to life in all her freshness. Her story also was told by Olympias to her enchanted son. "I am her priestess," she whispered, putting her hand before her mouth, "I attended her on Samothrace and learnt the whole story—"

She divulged to her child, and to him only, all that she knew; it was the miraculous presentation of the sacrifice of blood and the resurrection in light.



Just when did grey-haired, waddling Landice disappear into a romantic and shadowy obscurity? When did one begin to realize that bony Mr. Leonidas was not to be taken seriously, and that one could laugh when he coughed and sprawled about?—The awakening took place without anybody noticing it, quite gradually.

An external change came about through a move to the men's quarters. The child was taken away from the excitable influence of Olympias, and it was only on festive occasions that the mother was permitted to see and embrace him. It is true that for the time being Philip also stayed away, for he was very much occupied with political affairs. Besides, he was not interested in children, and he had decided not to have any personal contact with Alexander until the boy was fifteen years of age.—At that time he was not quite thirteen.

Philip had confidence in his Greek pedagogues. They were well-groomed, tactful men who could smile appropriately as occasion demanded. And as he paid them very well, the King did not question their ability. They promised to teach the Prince the rudiments of mathematics, and also to give him some idea

of rhetoric and history; he was even to learn to play the lyre.

His Highness was so talented, these highly paid teachers flatteringly assured the King, that he naturally lacked nothing. Among themselves they made fun of barbarous Philip who worshipped their culture like a *parvenu*; but there was no denying he had been endowed by the gods with an annoying talent for political intrigue; of this the Crown Prince did not as yet show any signs, and the Greek pedagogues gladly doubted whether it would ever be manifest in him.

For this boy was decidedly backward; no one with so much reticence could possibly have ability. Granted he was not wholly without charm, but it was awkward and repressed, with nothing manly or energetic about it.—His eyes alone puzzled even the pedagogues. Standing out under highly arched, black eye-brows, which always looked as if they were raised—even the forehead seemed to be slightly wrinkled—these eyes had an uncannily enlarged, bright, magnetic appearance. It was the bewitchingly penetrating look of his mother, only not gentle, nocturnal, hazy, not even really mocking; but rather keen, searching, and steel-grey in colour. Unfortu-

nately this grey had the disquieting peculiarity of sometimes turning to a blackish colour, to a blackish-violet even, and in this process the darker colour was much more pronounced in one eye than in the other. Then the face of this happy and gentle boy, who still enjoyed playing alone by the hour with flowers or small animals, assumed a look that aroused fear; around his weak, immaturely sweet mouth there was an action of the muscles which augured real danger for the future.

A number of boys belonging to the highest aristocracy of Macedonia were chosen to be the close friends and playmates of the Prince. Among these were Clitus and Hephaestion.

Alexander, Clitus and Hephaestion were generally a little apart from the others, meeting them only at meals, lessons and obligatory games.

The situation was complicated between the three, or, to be more exact, between Alexander and Clitus, and it was gentle Hephaestion who had to bear the brunt. While Alexander and Clitus appeared to be settling silent disputes between themselves, Hephaestion, playing the neutral intermediary, maintained a gentle,

courteous attitude, equally affectionate toward both. His lovely dark face was a little too big and too serious for his age, his mouth showing a delicate line; his brow was noble, his eye solemn and frank. His cheeks alone were a little too flat, they did not look filled out, nor the muscles alive. Hephaestion had a touching and pleasantly awkward way of bowing, he made a very low bow, not without a roguish grandeur, and with a suspicion of a smile. When he parted his lips, his teeth shone with a bluish hue.

Clitus on the other hand was disquietingly child-like. There was nearly always a smile on his soft cheeks. His small, straight nose, with its narrow bridge, broadened out like a baby's at the tip. His hair fell over a low, clear brow; his merry eyes, looking out from under even, black-drawn, long eyebrows, spoke an animated, irritatingly brilliant language.

The most impossible things happened in the play of his fancy. The immortals came to him, and Clitus celebrated his wedding with the goddesses of Olympus. Between jokes and imaginary stories he quoted philosophers. Although one would not have thought it, he knew a good deal.

He hated to be touched, and fought shy of and despised caresses. As if his skin were super-sensitive,

he started up when anyone stroked his fluffy hair. He did not hold much with voluptuousness, and made fun of Alexander and Hephaestion when they gave themselves up to it. The atmosphere in which he lived was purer than that in which others thrive. He was vain of his beauty; loved and dreamily admired his reflection wherever he found it in a mirror or in the water; but he scoffed at and ill-treated those who loved him for his beauty.

His self-confidence was radiant and hard like a precious stone. He indulged in little jokes about his genius and the good looks with which he was endowed; he was boastful, told lies, and spun yarns; he laughed and made little awkward and aimless movements with his hands. At the same time he made fun of those who had really achieved something: Antipater, Parmenion, and all grey-haired dignitaries and generals were the object of his impudent and lightning abuse. Without feeling the need of recognition, he was content to enjoy in solitary state the dream-undertakings which were never realized, for all he did was to plan and to scoff.

Alexander believed that compared with Clitus he must seem problematic and blunt. His own mind was full of muddled, complicated, worrying thoughts; in



Clitus however, all was miraculously arranged. When Alexander tried to picture the thoughts of Clitus, he had a vision, incomparably charming and enviable, of geometrically dancing figures, which were interwoven in playful clearness. But in him, in Alexander, there was much dark wrestling and struggling.

Although Clitus, in accordance with custom and natural tact, was courteous, even humble in his attitude toward the Prince, the latter was continually aware of his half-humorous, half inexplicably serious opposition. It grew to be Alexander's burning and dominant ambition to overcome this opposition, to win this child who in his aloofness was unapproachable. He finally discovered himself becoming his wooer. He longed to conquer him!—For two whole years he had no other ambition. In his heart he had decided that if anyone was going to be his life companion, it should be this child. I want only *one* friend: this boy. He was predestined to be my friend, Alexander said to himself with a blind and pathetic pertinacity. I must have him, I must have him, this is to be my first really important victory. But Clitus evaded him.

Hephaestion stood apart in a melancholy way. He summed up the situation with sorrowful accuracy,

quietly contenting himself with being the third person who would have to mediate and settle disputes. Often, when Alexander was baffled, he went to the faithful Hephaestion for consolation. The latter renounced without ever having possessed. He knew that there would never be anyone besides Alexander in his life. But with a sad and secret pride he also knew that Alexander needed him, and that he was necessary and indispensable to him.

Alexander was set on putting things to a test, the outcome of which he knew perfectly well in his heart. So one night he stood in the bare, cell-like room where Clitus slept. It was winter and bitterly cold. Alexander had only thrown a light wrap about him, and thus he stood at the door shivering. Clitus hardly looked across at him; he lay quietly on his back, staring at the ceiling.

Generally one could see his countenance laughing, and it was all the stranger to find it suddenly in deadly earnest. His merry eyes especially had changed, the pupils looking as if they had become larger and blacker.—Alexander, as if paralyzed with shyness, sat down on the edge of his bed. Clitus did not move. "I am looking at one spot," he said roughly. "I shall wait until that moves." "But do you want it

to move?" asked Alexander in a low tone of voice; it seemed to him that he was an intruder watching a very secret and forbidden game. "No, I do not," replied Clitus equally softly, but much more distinctly. "Someone else does. Somebody in me. But I do not know him." He was brutally silent.—Alexander squatted by his couch, his teeth chattering with cold. Nevertheless his gaze wandered all over this stony and empty apartment with an incomparable tenderness, over the inadequate couch and the child lying on it, the lines of his body visible under the thin blanket. As Alexander could not stand silence, he at last asked again: "Is it moving now?" He put his face on Clitus' pillow so that his hair lay alongside Clitus' cheek. "You are disturbing me very much," said Clitus without looking at him.

This merciless answer hit Alexander like a judicial sentence. He knew in that moment that the decision of a life-time had been taken for him. He felt like crying, but he only trembled. Now he hardly dared even to ask Clitus for a corner of his blanket.

Suddenly, his voice full of joy, Clitus cried: "They are moving—oh!" He spoke hurriedly, his eyes sparkling with happiness: "You see, I have now been sighting two points! When they collide, there will be

a catastrophe! I look forward—boum!! Now there's a crash——" He stopped suddenly, quite exhausted, closing his eyes as after a great strain.

Although a natural feeling of dignity demanded that he should go, Alexander stayed. He did not dare move, for fear of disturbing the implacably silent boy in his adventures. He realized that he was removed further from this stern dreamer than from another planet. Nevertheless he remained, having no longer the will-power to go. His final thought was that in any case everything now was all the same. However, he did not dare to meet Clitus' eye again, so he buried his face in his hands.

After this night in which Clitus had spoken the decisive and irreparable word, the complicated friendship between the three was over. It was Clitus who left the group.

There was a rapid change in Alexander. It was as if his very painful defeat had supplied him with strength. He grew to be more self-possessed, more handsome, more hardened and more elastic. Hephaestion alone still saw him in a gentle mood. He understood everything without Alexander having to tell him. He was the only one in whose arms Prince Alexander knew the joy of being able to weep.

A few weeks later, Alexander quite suddenly became the honoured favourite of the Court and of Macedonia. He had accomplished his first deed of heroism; he, the thirteen-year-old, had overcome the young and dangerous stallion Bucephalus.

There had been a general rumour and talk about the terrible savagery of the Thessalian charger which, afraid of its own shadow, had hitherto thrown off every rider. When even the boldest had not dared to break it in, the boy had jumped bareback onto it. The pressure of his legs was so incomparably strong, his fist gripped so gently and confidently, that the young animal, after rearing once, began to prance about quite happily, finally falling into a quiet trot.

For the first time in his life Alexander was surrounded by flowers and ribbons, for the first time the soldiers paid him homage. They shouted: "Tamer of horses! Ruler of men!" His name was on the lips of everyone in the capital. Suddenly he was also considered quite handsome. "He has tamed wild Bucephalus, and he is only thirteen years old, the handsome boy!" cried the women to one another; and the men were thinking of the future of Macedonia. The story went that King Philip cried for joy.

Among those who were waving their hands was

Hephaestion, his eyes beaming. But a little apart, in the background, stood Clitus, whom Alexander immediately spied in the seething crowd. He stood there nonchalantly, with his chest out and arms hanging down. He seemed to be smiling, but one could not tell how.

Alexander, seated high on his steed Bucephalus, the crowd cheering him for his graceful appearance, suddenly felt ugly and heavy in the midst of his triumph.

## II

The fame of Aristotle, who came to Pella as Pedagogue, had preceded him from Greece. It was all the more pleasing to find he was an accomplished courtier. He always had the right smile and the appropriate word. He was known to have spent some time in a professional capacity at different courts, and his father, Nicomachus of Stagiros, had even been at the Court of Pella, where he was personal physician to King Amyntus of Macedonia.

Philip personally introduced him to his son. He did this in a fussy, somewhat embarrassed manner:



“Your tutor, my child,” and then laughed inopportunistically. He immediately began to speak to Aristotle of the frescoes of Zeuxis, and of a certain Euphraius of Orea, a very learned disciple of Plato. Philip had never mentioned him before, but now he suddenly said that for years he had been his dearest friend.

The King’s boisterously awkward behaviour was carefully scrutinized by Aristotle who, bowing slightly several times, in his turn mentioned something about the world-famous culture of Macedonia. Only Alexander, standing in the background, was pained. Holding his head on one side, he bit his lip and his eyes darkened. Now his father even slapped the foreign scholar on the shoulder, but this was met by an indulgent smile on the part of Aristotle.

The lessons took place in a nymph-grove near Myeza, about an hour from Pella; Aristotle himself had chosen this garden, as he found it suitable and attractive, far away from the traffic of the metropolis and at the same time easy of access. Philip, to whom he explained this in an elegant speech, said afterwards that he was judicious and knew the art of living. Sometimes the lectures were attended by specially selected friends of the Prince—Hephaestion and the dark-haired Philotas, son of Parmenion, Craterus,

Meleagrus and Colinus—; sometimes teacher and pupil wandered about by themselves. Their private talks were the most fruitful.

In the morning, when they met on the sandy promenade, the Prince bowed with exquisite politeness. The most careful propriety was observed between him and the philosopher, and pupil and master outdid one another in extravagant correctness.

When Aristotle made a joke, Alexander was enchanted and laughed, his head thrown back a little, his eye fixed upon the jester in an affectionately tearful way. As Alexander sauntered along, he thought there was something rather attractive in the way his teacher would suddenly stop; for this was a habit of Aristotle's as of many pedagogues: while they are walking, they will suddenly stand still with forefinger raised and a frown on their brow, so as to explain something important in an impressive way. This sensitive pupil had got to know his master so well that he would anticipate his desire a few seconds ahead and slacken his pace, and Aristotle was thus led to believe he was stopping to oblige the moody Prince, and not to satisfy his own whim.

There was less courtesy, but more concentration in the look which the attentive young listener would oc-

casionaly cast sideways at the lecturer. With stern accuracy he then studied the way his wrinkles went down from the eye-sacks, making grooves and little furrows in the thin, brown, fleshless and skinny cheeks, while playing around the agitated mouth with its bluish lips in a teasing and irresponsible manner. This face, which he had been studying for some time, was now almost indecently familiar to Alexander, so that he was often ashamed to think how well he knew it: this dark face, wrinkled and white-bearded, with its blue-edged mouth, tired, word-worn, yet still moving; sharp eyes, pale grey and with sensitive lids, screwed up when he was short-sighted or nervous. His deeply-lined brow, incessantly working; on his grey garment the large, slender, hairy hands, lined, brown and spirited,—just like his old face,—their large, round, light finger-nails looking as if they were loose and might fall out like the teeth of an old man.—Alexander knew this long, wrinkled fore-finger only too well; it would go up admonishingly, waver in a tired way, appear to grow cold, tremble impressively, and then suddenly drop as if lifeless.

Alexander asked questions; he wanted to know everything and never knew enough. “Your curiosity is insatiable,” said the tutor gently reproving him,

but with affection; and his little wrinkles would play indulgently around eyes and lips. Then again, but differently, quite seriously, with a sternly concentrated, steel-grey look, he would say right at the boy standing expectantly at his side, lowering his voice and thus betraying his fear and admiration: "Your curiosity is insatiable, by all the gods that I invoke!"

Alexander could stand this look without flinching, although it went through and through. He innocently continued to enquire after those things which interested him, demanding information, soliciting instruction, flattering and wooing the tutor, flirting and coaxing him. Aristotle refrained from looking at him again; the boy's voice grew all the more seductive, sweetly veiled, like pale silver; suddenly clear as a bell, resplendent, as if light were penetrating a beautiful dawn. If the master turned, seduced by the wonder of this voice, and did look at him again, he would start at this face which looked at him mockingly, as if seeking for an answer. This face wanted to know, it wanted to know an enormous number of things, immeasurably much. It was insistent, there was no joking about it.

So Aristotle held forth, explained, formulated. He spoke of the art of rhetoric, of its obligations, pos-

sibilities, and dangers; with the help of examples he explained and discussed the style and manner of the Greek orators, the classical as well as the modern, adversely criticizing some and pointing to others with his forefinger raised. All oratory was bad as soon as it grew into a playful egotism, nor did he think well of sophistry. In Athens it had happened that a speaker, glorying in paradox, had allowed himself to be persuaded to devote a lecture to the "Praise of Mice"; such jokes the philosopher considered contemptible. The last classical orator he mentioned was Isocrates, who happened to be a special admirer of Philip.

He defined the conception of poetry and, by quotations, which often developed into recitations, he illustrated their fundamental principles. When he recited from Homer or from the great tragedians, Alexander felt that he had missed his vocation as an actor. His cheeks were aflame and his eyes afire, while his voice growled and hummed. At such moments, although the Prince could not explain it, the tutor went down in his estimation.

He sought to explain the anatomy of the human body, as well as the laws governing his inner life, which he called psychology. He went on to the animals which he divided into families. First he would

take them as a whole, going on later to discuss them more fully and insistently, describing the peculiarities, habits and needs of all forms of life as well as he knew them. Alexander learnt about the habits of the hermit crab and the desert lion; finally Aristotle even sought to instruct him in the psychology of animals, but here he was a little out of his depth.

He held forth on the subject of stones, flowers and various species of trees; then he went into the mysteries of nature in general. He became enthusiastic and frequently stopped in his walk, as he described the hidden process of chemical combinations and dissolutions. "One must never talk about 'genesis,' but always about 'synthesis,' " he argued, almost querulously. "Also never about 'decay,' but only about 'dissolution.' There is no decay: conditions merely alter.—Anaxagoras has, of course, taught this doctrine already."

He always liked coming back to Anaxagoras. "He is my predecessor," he used to say very importantly. "He recognized that the world formed one whole and that the matter of which it was composed could not be divided up or cut off with an axe, neither the hot from the cold, nor the cold from the hot."

Here he would stand still, and this was anticipated



by the sensitive Alexander. "Do you hear, Prince? There is no possibility of anything existing by itself, but everything contains a part of the whole in itself." And then, with a pathos he seldom evinced: "Only the mind,—the mind, Alexander, is something that is simple; it is its own master and not mixed up with any other thing." The old lover of the mind, putting his head on one side, then declared facetiously, lasciviously: "You know, it is the finest, purest and hardest, the most irresistible, noble, irrecoverable of all." He paused before resuming his walk and his teaching.

He took his predecessors one by one, beginning their illustrious line with Thales of Milet and ending with Plato. Besides a thoughtful word of praise, he also had for each a malicious remark, fittingly worded.

Alexander was interested most of all in Pythagoras, whose adventurous and significant life-story was well known to him: this most restless of all seekers after the truth had travelled across Egypt, Babylon, and Persia as far as India. His insatiability staggered and fascinated the Prince who tried to put his feelings into words.

But at this point Aristotle covered his ears with his hands. "This Pythagoras!" he groaned, his el-

bows pointed outward like angry wings, his hands over his ears which were covered inside with white hair. "Oh, this old swindler with his pretended secrets! His despicable lack of precision which was unfortunately taken for depth, has ruined far too many people already! Be on your guard, Prince Alexander! Don't you know that towards the end of his life Master Plato, under the influence of the mysteries of figures, became appropriately angry?"

And his agitation did not subside for some time. Painfully, yet cruelly did he ridicule his great teacher's attempt to combine ideology with the mystic-orphic revelations of the hated Pythagoras. He called the latter anti-reck and an unmoral seducer of the mind. In regard to the doctrine of the migration of souls, of metempsychosis, of pre-existence and of man's fall from grace, he believed that every intellectual conscience must needs rebel against it. His own conscience was so indignant that he stamped and screamed.

This caused Alexander to smile. His courtesy prevented him from saying anything, but in his heart he thought how the little he knew of the secret doctrines of buffeted Pythagoras attracted and tempted him

more than the whole of the clear and comprehensively wise system of his scolding mentor, Aristotle.

The latter, still resentful, protested as if personally offended, against the presentation of a personal immortality. "All such things are unfounded twaddle," he ended spitefully, "what remains is nothing but the indivisible in us, the mind which I call *Nous*. But this has no longer any feeling, it is entirely impersonal."

Then he discussed Speusippus who had succeeded Plato as Principal of the Academy, and whom he called the "little nephew of the illustrious dead man." "Well, he has now surrendered, finally and irrevocably, to this pseudo-Egyptian darkness," he remarked bitterly, yet triumphantly.

When he came to speak of poor Speusippus and the present condition of the Academy, he grew particularly venomous; he then loved to mention the incomparably more interesting school which he himself hoped to establish. On such occasions Alexander would suddenly grow tired and look away. Beside him was once more the ambitious old man who had smiled insipidly when making his bow to King Philip.

They sat, and they wandered about. On the beau-

tiful garden-paths were sun-spots which Alexander found very amusing. They jumped about with the foliage as it swayed in the wind.

Smiling at these little sun-spots, Alexander begged almost sentimentally: "Tell me of the last things!" "The last thing is the mind," asserted the philosopher almost obstinately. And Alexander, with a roguishness which caused his teacher to fear and tremble: "Do tell me, master, about the mind."

They sat down, for Aristotle easily grew tired. The stone bench was cool; in the tree-tops above them the birds were singing. Alexander heard what he had often heard and what interested him in the highest degree whenever he heard it again, although it never fully satisfied him: Aristotle's doctrine of the *Nous*, of the immovable principle which was the primeval and most mysterious origin and impetus of all motion. "The perfect be-ing which does nothing but think, and solely of itself, as the only object worthy of itself." He recited all this with a certain dry ecstasy, carried away by the idea he was developing, but pedantic even in his enthusiasm.

Alexander, who was listening with a concentration which darkened his eyes, was considering all this time what it was that was lacking in Aristotle's doc-

trine. "What is it that does not satisfy me?" he pondered earnestly, listening all the while.

Followed long mornings in the garden full of complicated discussion. The old man, with his scheming, ordering and sifting mind endeavoured with such perseverance as springs only from love, to woo the insatiable soul of the boy which never found peace and was always straining after the infinite.

They left no subject untouched. Everywhere they found problems, but they were all capable of solution. On the lips of the scholar everything was schematized.

He expounded the nature of matter which was composed of four elements, the fifth being the ether. Out of this were formed the constellations. He grew a little less lucid when it came to the position of the earth in space. Contrary to Pythagoras, who knew otherwise, he regarded the earth as stationary, also the stars and planets, and the sun, the latter being attached to a hollow ball which revolved. He claimed with that irritability to which he was prone when feeling uncertain, that space must be shown as limited, and empty space was unthinkable and therefore non-existent, while time on the other hand must be without beginning or end. Thus he did not dwell on the conception of eternity, but passed it over hurriedly,

fearing the dark look in his pupil's eyes whenever this subject came up.

The last morning which he spent with Alexander was devoted to the question of the ultimate goal of man's life; his reply did not satisfy. That "virtue" was the ultimate aim of man's existence sounded a little weak; it was all the more painful to learn that at man's final end virtue and happiness were synonymous. The whole being of Olympias' son rose in revolt against these hedonistically cunning ethics.

Thus, in the last hour they spent together, teacher and pupil were greater strangers than in the first: the old friend of wisdom had wooed in vain. In individual subjects he had enriched the mind of the boy entrusted to him, but had been disappointing to him as a whole.

For the first time in his life Aristotle, 'accustomed only to admiration, felt that he had been found out, judged, rejected—and that just where he had more particularly endeavoured to influence and to please. This failure paralyzed and disillusioned him, deepening the wrinkles from the eyes downwards to the flabby excitable mouth. "This period of teaching has been my sternest school," he admitted to himself. He was sadder than if he had lost all his wealth or even



his knowledge. Such sadness is found only in him who has loved in vain.

When King Philip, on the occasion of the philosopher's farewell audience, asked him what impression the Prince had made upon him, the former replied in a dignified manner. "Prince Alexander," he said guardedly, "is without question the most talented young man whom I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. The only question is whether he will know how to concentrate and utilize his genius. He loves the unlimited and likes to wander from the subject; he will indicate without pursuing his point.—Of course he is very young," he concluded, bowing.

His Majesty nodded anxiously.

It so happened that Aristotle was presented to Queen Olympias only on the day of his departure. She scrutinized him with lowered brow and a long look of scornful doubt. While he was uttering his elegant speeches, this look darkened until it became hostile and even hateful.

Alexander's criticism of the pedagogue, as he formulated it to Hephaestion, was as follows: "He is perhaps a genius. But there are many gifted pedants." He also made fun of the fact that Aristotle always carried in his stomach a little leather pouch, filled

with hot oil, for fear of catching cold or contracting an intestinal catarrh. "That shows how careful he is!"—This finished him. Despite the precaution of the little oil-pouch, the philosopher departed with slight stomach trouble, and in a mood of great depression. By way of impressing him at the last he left with his pupil a saying of Democritus to serve him as a rule of life.

"I would rather discover one single causal connection than become King of the Persians." His stomach trouble would have increased had he seen the smile with which the boy shelved this legacy.

### III

King Philip traced his lineage to Heracles. That did not help him much, no more than the fact that Olympias called Achilles the progenitor of her race. In Athens they never took him seriously,—not with all the respect they had for him. It is true that Euripides had been at the court of Pella, in the reign of Archelaus I; one of the Macedonian kings, Alexander I, had even been admitted to the Olympic games.

Nevertheless this Demosthenes had been allowed to

say publicly that the Macedonians were barbarians, not even good enough for Hellas as slaves. Philip did not forget this, even though he joked about it. Why then all this display of culture which he practised? He told everyone the cost of the frescoes of Zeuxis in his reception room: everyone that is, who would listen to him: they were worth a whole four hundred talents. He had chosen Aristotle to be the teacher of his eldest son, this Aristotle who was esteemed so highly. None of this was of any use: They feared him in Greece, but they did not regard him as one of themselves.

Sometimes he would say to himself: that they feared him was the main thing. He was rich, since he owned Amphipolis and thereby the gold mines. Let them poke fun at him and call him a *parvenu* among themselves, he could always buy anything he wanted.

Not only did he allow himself an army whose cleanliness and discipline had become proverbial; but also their culture. The young officers and the well-born boys of his *entourage* were obliged to attend lectures of instruction; the lads had to learn Homer and the Greek tragedians by heart, and anyone who faltered was unmercifully whipped. A smart love of culture obtained.—For his child he hired Greek peda-

gogues, Thessalian girl dancers who were attractive, astronomers from the East; embalmers from Egypt who had to wrap and perfume his dead relatives; pretty boys from Athens, because it was the fashion; anyhow Greeks, Greeks of all sorts and professions. It was ludicrous how many could be bought; actors, *literati*, and orators; ointment-mixers, cooks, troupes of dancers. They arrived carefully apparelled, witty and morally neglected; they stayed as long as they were wanted, if anything a little longer.

They stayed and enjoyed themselves; but what they reported to Athens was not exactly flattering to the King who had to put up with them. The frescoes of Zeuxis they mentioned only in passing, but the crudeness of this mighty, yet uncivilized city they would describe in detail. The families who counted there, what a boorish, unpolished rabble they were. Probably not one of them could spell properly, and it was doubtful whether they washed more than once a month. In their circles customs had arisen the antiquity of which would seem grotesque to the inhabitant of a metropolis. Anyone who had not slain some enemy, had to remain standing at feasts instead of sitting or lying down, equally he who had not succeeded in killing a boar on the run.

The sinister Queen with her magnetic eyes and lion's mouth, whose barbarous piety gave rise to much comment, played an important part in the amusing reports of these gossips. Such a trafficking with the underworld was scandalous, she had too many ONGOINGS with her snakes, her occult victims.

It was said that her son whom she loved with so objectionable a tenderness—while she remained fairly indifferent to the younger daughter, the anæmic little Cleopatra—had probably not been born in a natural manner, certainly not begotten of her husband. A mysterious being had been with her, in what form nobody knew. Had he shot into her womb as a flash of lightning, had he approached her in the forest in the form of an animal? She had given herself to some deity, that was the gist of the rumour,—it was, of course, not an Olympic or Hellenistic, but rather a Chthonic deity, whose home is on the deep sea beds. Or again he had come to her from a distance, she conjuring him up with great cunning from Babylon or from Egypt. It was no coincidence that on the night of Alexander's birth the sanctuary of the mother of the gods at Ephesus had been burnt down in very strange circumstances; all this was connected in some mysterious way with the great event.

Thus the parasites from Greece enveloped Olympias with mysteries. But her relations with the King were simply taken as a joke; in Athens they concealed this kind of thing more gracefully.

That Philip had married her, the legitimate heiress to the kingdom of Epiros, only as a matter of policy, was of course well known; but there was really no need for them to hate each other as they did. Dark flames of antipathy shot from her eyes whenever she had to greet her husband on official occasions. She inclined her head, barely lowering her eyelids, and the corners of her mouth in her disgust and with such obvious derision that no one could help noticing it. In return, the King disgraced her whenever an opportunity presented itself. He carried on publicly with other women in a way that was infamous. This Philina, a little strumpet from Thessalia, he treated as his real wife, and he was more affectionate with Arrhidaeus, the bastard she bore him, than he was with Alexander, although poor Arrhidaeus seemed to be developing into an idiot.

Matters grew worse when he began to love Cleopatra, who came of a good family. Her uncle Attalus was a black-bearded intrigant of the immediate *entourage* of the King. At the big drinking-bouts he



was one of those who could stand the most; he always sat upright, cool-headed, next to the King, whom he entertained with indecent jokes. He wove his selfish little counsels into these jokes with malicious cunning. In this way he persuaded the King to decide upon a public wedding with the voluptuous Cleopatra.

The little Greeks shook with malicious mirth; now at last there would be a really big scandal.

And they were right, the scandal was as blatant as the sensation-loving rabble had wished. The betrothal of the King with his niece made Attalus careless, the triumph went to his head, for the first time he drank more than he could stand. He babbled, and belched, his vulgar mouth appearing blood-red in the midst of his black, scrubby beard. Pointing to Prince Alexander with a trembling hand, as he sat motionless opposite to him, he said: "Now it is all over with him"—here he spat and laughed, screaming—, "now we shall have the legitimate heir to the throne, the Prince, the true Macedonian, the son of Cleopatra!" The heavy mug hit him in the face, he bled, bellowed vociferously and struck the ground; Alexander who had hurled it at him, stood erect, quivering, his eyes dangerously on fire.

On the other side of the hall Philip was just leav-

ing the embrace of drunken Cleopatra who lay across the table with white swelling breasts; he screamed, and stamped: his own uncle had been insulted. As Alexander's silence, which made the atmosphere quiver with hatred, roused him even to frenzy and madness, he reeled and threw himself upon him, raising his fist unsteadily, his face swollen and red with fury. He was held back by his faithful friends, Parmenion and Antipater. But the impertinent Greeks jibed, giggled, egged him on: "I will beat him!" cried the King, while the Crown Prince was quietly waiting for him. The father staggered right in front of him, crashed to the ground, vomited, lay begrimed at his feet. Alexander turned away with curt scorn. He hurriedly left the hall without so much as casting another glance at the man on the floor. He was followed by a few of his friends.—

Next morning the Prince left the capital with his deeply offended mother. He himself, influenced by clever mediators, returned after a few weeks; Olympias remained absent from Pella a whole year, at the Court of Epirus where she stayed with relatives.

This happened when Alexander was fifteen years old.

With a precision fostered by hate Alexander observed, judged and examined the policy of his father. In conclusion he considered it excellent, but at the same time disgusting.

Alexander between the age of sixteen and seventeen, did not yet know what he himself wanted; or at least he knew it only in a vague, grandiloquent way, as one knows what one dreamt the previous night. But each day it became more evident that Philip's aims were not his, although they might outwardly bear some resemblance. Philip was planning a campaign to Asia as soon as he had obtained the leadership of Greece, and the pan-Hellenic drive of revenge was his pretext for claiming this leadership. "I am harsh with you," he said to the Greeks whom he ruthlessly suppressed, "but only so that one day you may become united under my rule. I want the best for you, I want your nation to rise, you will thank me when the Great King has atoned for the shame he once inflicted upon you."

All he wanted was to become the Greek national hero, and the Asiatic campaign would make him that. This rough, but cunning man advanced step by step, he was never impetuous, but always astute and con-

sistent. His son, watching these steps, which were cruelly and cunningly devised, was repelled and yet obliged to admire him.

Demosthenes, of course, was wrong in every word he said; there did not seem to be much psychology in this rabid lawyer. What narrow-minded misunderstanding to suspect Philip of directing his plans against Athens, since nothing was dearer to his heart than to receive in this very Athens some recognition of his heroism. There to see a monument erected to himself, there to be a sort of demi-god, that was the one burning goal of his vanity.

Then what was it that this excited lawyer really wanted? He went so far as to make friends with the Persian King, from hysterical hatred of Philip. As an honest nationalist he should have propagated an alliance between Macedonia and Athens, instead of slandering and preventing it. Or was he perhaps set on the absolute supremacy of Athens? His countrymen to whom in his pedagogic zeal he spoke such hard truths, he knew well enough not to doubt whether that were impossible.

Although he thought them prejudiced and short-sighted, the Crown Prince of Macedonia read the rhetorical hymns of hate of the old nationalistic demo-

crat with a certain satisfaction; for they accompanied all his father's expeditions and interfered with them in a way that was coarse enough for the rabble on the street. This intrigant with his somewhat sombre past achieved something even in politics. Had his career not commenced with a lawsuit against his own guardian, when he had resorted to very low tricks?—He finally brought about the alliance between Athens and Thebes, though at a time when it was no longer useful.

For in the meantime Philip had already gone too far. Alexander had all the more contempt for the heavy old democrat since the latter had not in the end achieved anything at all. Anyone using such unscrupulous methods would at least need to be successful. Philip, on the other hand, this mirthful and uncultured boor—who was not even the lawful king of Macedonia, for he was only acting for Amyntas, his sickly nephew, son of the old Perdiccas,—was successful with all his ruses and intrigues. When Alexander could not sleep at night, he would go through the list of these fateful triumphs in chronological order.

He had been tenacious, tenacious and infamous. Relentlessly and cunningly, he had conquered one

power after another, and made monarch after monarch beholden to him. The result was that Macedonia, which until recently had been a plot of grazing-land that could be overlooked at a glance, was now the sovereign power. Philip, standing before a great assembly, made the following announcement: "Under our leadership a united Greece will advance against the hereditary Asiatic enemy."

But the dignified demagogue in Athens, Demosthenes, wanted something different. The Hellenic alliance against Philip was made, even Athens and Thebes joining forces.

Alexander lay on his couch, his heart full of hate, and pondered thus: "It is true that, as matters came to a head, even I wanted a victory for ourselves, although no one will enjoy it but my father. It was after all my intervention which decided the battle of Chæronea."

That was the second occasion on which Philip shed tears of joy over his son; a lack of seemliness which filled Alexander with disgust. "He is aware of nothing," he thought to himself, with a great loathing, and turned away abruptly, almost with impatience, when his grieved father wished to embrace him. The latter



started back, failed to understand, and remained awkwardly where he was, his arms outstretched. Alexander, whose face was half averted, scrutinized the sturdy, yet ageing man with a quick glance of unmerciful cruelty such as only sons can give to their fathers; he observed the hard, grey, speckled, pointed beard, the sensual and brutal mouth with lips always moist; the coarse nose, the clever, reserved little eyes. But what he did not see was that these eyes were moist, and that Philip's gesture was touchingly clumsy, pleading and helpless. He only heard his father murmuring with a solemnity which did not suit him and which was comic in its effect: "My son, my victories are for you, everything is for you, you are to be a greater king than I.—"

At this point Alexander, with a last ounce of pity, finally averted his face completely lest Philip should see his malicious and contemptuous smile.

After the battle of Chæronea it became evident how unsuspecting the policy of Demosthenes had always been: While the King of Macedonia punished Thebes by garrisoning the town, he handled the conquered

Athens with kid gloves. It was granted liberty and autonomy, and did not even have to pay a ransom for the release of its prisoners.

In return, Philip had the satisfaction of becoming an honorary citizen of the town which had so passionately fought against him; and his General, Parmenion, and his son Alexander were accorded similar honours.

#### IV

Alexander and the half-witted Arrhidaeus were almost friends, although a number of persons at the Court used the poor harlot's son as a political weapon against the Crown Prince. His slovenly mother, the made-up Philina, had run away long ago, and no one knew in what capital she was now trafficking. But there were some who found a missing courtesan more agreeable as Queen-mother than this aggressive, but inscrutable Olympias. Others again, and especially the followers of the cunning Attalus, set their hopes on the son with whom the new Queen, Cleopatra, was now pregnant.

Arrhidaeus' low-set, angular brow, clouded with melancholy, was partly covered by his felt-like hair.

His broad mouth, which was always ready to cry, could only babble, while his trembling, evil-smelling hands moved helplessly; his enormous larynx protruding to a point, jumped about sadly to the same rhythm. His eyes certainly revealed that he was Alexander's brother. Their glance was deep and absent-minded, their colour golden brown mingled with other shades. However idiotic the motion of this pitiful mouth and his revolting old man's hands might be, his careless eyes would express it in their profound language.

Arrhidaeus was wont to crouch in a corner of the cellar, where it was warm and dirty, his hands clasped about his bony knees. Why did he laugh quietly to himself? Because the little mice and the fat rats were teasing him.—Here Alexander used to visit him and stay for many hours. They sat in silence, but sometimes they spoke, nobody knew about what. Sometimes they seized each other's hands, their faces bending down towards one another. At last their foreheads would touch. No one could see that there was even some resemblance between them.

Alexander never spoke to his half-brother about the mischief a few designing persons had caused over the name of Arrhidaeus, it was even doubtful whether

he would have understood what he meant. Even when the scandal in connection with the Carian King's daughter divided the entire Court into two camps, these two never mentioned it in their quiet dialogues; they had other things to tell one another.

It is true that outside the Crown Prince turned this new and most crude example of his father's tactlessness to his own great advantage. The facts were as follows: The Carian monarch had despatched a solemn delegation to submit to Pixodarus a proposal for the betrothal of his eldest daughter to the lawful heir to the Macedonian throne. Philip had received the delegates very politely, arranging one of his lively evenings for them,—to which Alexander had very wisely not been invited,—and had then declared the King's daughter should take the Crown Prince, whose name was Arrhidaeus, that he was pretty, clever and enterprising. Old Pixodarus, who had not been informed of the more intimate affairs of the Macedonian Court, assented and even expressed his gratitude. All this came to the ears of Alexander. His party staged a great scandal: that now Philip was even representing the unsuccessful offspring of his vulgar passions as the heir to the throne, and this before foreign courts. He should not have gone as far as that; the adherents

of Olympias and her son grew frantic. Alexander on his own initiative sent messengers to bewildered Pixodarus: Philip had been pulling his leg, Arrhidaeus was nothing more than the ill-formed child of a whore, and a poor bastard was to have been given to his princess as a bed-fellow. There was a great burst of rage on the part of the ambitious old gentleman: the delegation which he in his turn now released brought tales of devilish happenings. The whole business was threatening to have the most serious consequences in foreign political affairs; to save the situation in part at any rate, Philip was obliged to use all the diplomacy of which he was capable. His most distinguished general, Parmenion with the faithful cat-face, set out to Caria taking with him the greetings, gifts and apologies of his master.

All these externally insignificant events were not discussed by the brothers, as they crouched brow to brow in the cellar, holding their secret converse.

The little Greeks had never expected to be provided with so much amusement at this court of barbarians, it was even more lively than in Athens.

Hardly had the affair with the Carian Princess been

somewhat forgotten than the incredibly humorous affair between Philip and his page Pausanias took place.

For once again the King, in the course of one of his lively evening entertainments, had completely lost control of himself, and this time, for a change, not in the presence of a woman, but by disgracing this lad, this dear little sentimental Pausanias, at the banquetting table.

After the scandal at the royal table poor Pausanias, like an offended lady, rushed into Clitus' room. His indignation made him look even more beautiful than usual, and with dishevelled hair hanging over a distracted countenance he paced up and down in front of Clitus' bed. He stamped with his feet, grew crimson, and finally cried. Shaken with sobs, he fell on his knees before Clitus. "Such meanness," he whispered into his tears, while his wet face was buried in his friend's pillow, "now you don't respect me any longer." This thought was more than he could bear, his sobbing grew hysterical, he threw himself about as if lashed with a whip. Suddenly he heard a clear, gentle voice: "Now pay attention, Pausanias! You have only one way out of this, and if you do not take it, you will always



remain degraded. But you are a man, my little Pausanias. Now listen—" Pausanias listened.

At day-break Clitus was alone. With knees drawn up and his hands clasped around them, he sat crouching on his bed, for a long time uttering no sound, only smiling and rocking his head as if to merry tunes.

When the birds outside began to sing, he turned his face to the window. With a fresh, clear voice, he spoke into the grey morning which was already full of pink clouds "I shall see him on the throne, and that soon—it will be a fun—"

He whistled something; when a breeze made him feel chilly, he pulled the blanket closer about him. He lay back, closing his eyes, smiling still.

After a few minutes he was asleep.

On the same morning there came the reply of the oracle whom Philip had consulted in regard to the Asiatic campaign:

"See, the steer is decorated, he awaits the sacrifice."

Philip thought the utterance ambiguous and confusing: the question remained, *who* was the steer? He sent for a few learned men, who politely interpreted the riddle thus: Persia was the steer, already crowned and prepared for his fall. Notwithstanding Philip still felt a certain anxiety.

But he thought he should wait no longer; all of a sudden he had no more time to lose. A nervousness took possession of him which he had not known before. Rather prematurely he sent a section of his army under the leadership of Harmenius and Attalus across the Hellespont.

Before he followed with the rest of his troops, the wedding of the little Princess Cleopatra with a young prince of Epirus was to be celebrated, and that with much solemnity at Aegaea. On such occasions Philip showed himself conservative, almost sentimental. Aegaea, the former capital of Macedonia, which had long been deserted and desolate, was by tradition the city of coronations, weddings, funeral feasts. The whole Court in its splendour started out for Pella, accompanied by the more inquisitive section of the population: there was to be a Greek theatre, a masquerade and procession in Aegaea. It made everyone feel uncomfortable that Olympias refused to go

with them, but she obstinately chose to remain at home.

Altogether the mood of the illustrious family was not a very pleasant one. Philip, surrounded by his officers, was somewhat aggressively cheerful as if he had a specially wonderful joke in store for that day. He made thundering allusions, and slapped his lords on the shoulder till it resounded and hurt; and from early morning he smelt of alcohol. It struck some as very tactless that on this very public occasion his second wife, Lady Cleopatra, sat by his side; added to which she was in interesting circumstances and much too magnificently adorned for her condition. All the more homely was the appearance of young Cleopatra, Alexander's little sister, who was weak and had a sad, vacant look. Her small face was pale as snow, and the sad eyes gazed around as for help. She did not know her young Prince at all, nor did she seem to anticipate his arrival with any sense of pleasure. Moreover, on the eve of her departure for Aegaea, she had once again quarrelled with her easily roused mother; those who were closest to the ladies knew that the Queen had even hit her daughter, and it was said there were blue spots on the bride's tender back. She could not appreciate her father's

coarse jokes, for she did not even understand them.

Alexander himself did not laugh throughout the journey. He held himself aloof with a few of his comrades; Clitus was not among them, nor was the dishonoured Pausanias; but this was not so evident. No one knew where the two had disappeared.

The friendly Hephaestion endeavoured to cheer up the sombre Prince by quietly telling scandalous tales of the society at Court. The others too, tried to be merry, Philotas, the son of Parmenion, Nearchus, Craterus, Perdikkas, Ptolemy, Coenus; they vied with one another in little indecencies: "One can guess why that pretty Pausanias had not come along to-day. He can't walk any more or sit on a horse: King Philip has injured him!" They roared with laughter. But Alexander did not turn a hair.

The joke which King Philip had thought out for the wedding celebrations was even more unseemly than anyone could have feared.

The procession of the gods passed off to everybody's satisfaction; the chariots were sumptuously decorated, the actors disguised like very gods; and the people watched the sacred luxury with reverence

and lasciviousness. But the cries of joy died on their lips when in the midst of the blessed of Olympus a grotesque mask appeared. This red-speckled monster, seated on his carriage, blew himself up like a turkey; it had an absurd bird's nose and horrible donkey's ears. A whisper went through the terrified crowd that the masquerader was no other than King Philip. It was too much, the people began to murmur that this was blaspheming God. The Greek embassies did not disguise the fact that they were extremely shocked, and the Asiatics looked on quietly but with repulsion. The persons of the Court did not know what to do; they whispered in amazement that his Majesty had undoubtedly lost all feeling of shame and disgrace; how could he so boldly offend every religious instinct in man! Was it possible he wanted in this disgusting way to show that he himself was a god? Matters were going too far, even the old veterans were grouching.

Everybody was watching the Crown Prince with curiosity, and yet with anxiety: what was he going to do, how did he look in the presence of his father's derangement?—Alexander looked away with a sombre expression. His friends urged him, but he shook his head. They cried: "Speak to the people, Alexander! At this moment they all hate him! He is making him-

self a god, and what a god! Just see how he puffs himself up and sways about. No one applauds, no one is cheering—”

Philip in his sacrilegious make-up drove through a death-like silence. If only someone had laughed! But his megalomaniac extravagance was greeted by a relentless silence. As no one thought it funny, his humorous gestures grew more and more repellent. He appeared to be dead drunk, otherwise he would not have gesticulated so indecently.

At this moment when the awkwardness of the situation had become intolerable, an elegantly disguised person in black jumped with lightning speed onto the step of the carriage; a knife was barely seen to flash when the King collapsed, uttering a dull roar, and a dark stream of blood spread over the gilded wood of his vehicle. The carriage did not stop immediately, it went on another few steps. Philip, the knife in his throat, spitting, rattling and bleeding, was hanging out of the carriage; he dragged along the ground, his hair sweeping the dust, his comic mask slipping out of its place. Underneath one suddenly caught a glimpse of his dead-white countenance with wide open mouth and an expression of terror.

The yell that rose up from the crowd sounded as



much like relief as dismay. Everybody realized that this deed *had* to happen at that particular moment; how could the next few seconds have gone by otherwise—nevertheless the assassin, who had been seized by the soldiers, was already the victim of curses and stones. The cloth was torn from his face: it was Pausanias whom they held. With eyes that were brown as those of a deer, large and completely vacant, he stared at those who were putting him in chains. He moved as a man in his sleep. They wanted to hit him in the face, but were moved by his young face, white with terror, and his helpless, insipid and desperate beauty.

One and all fled in confusion, while amid the men's shouts and curses the hysterical screams of the women rose up like darts.

The Greeks rejoiced, knowing no shame: they yelled for joy and waved their arms about: "He is dead, Philip is dead!" Most of all would they have liked to carry their joyful news to Athens there and then. In all this chaos no one noticed that poor little Cleopatra, the forgotten bride was falling into a swoon, uttering tiny shrill cries. Cleopatra, the real wife of Philip, moaned all the louder. She behaved as voluptuously in her sorrow as she did in her revels:

she was magnificent to look upon as she tore her hair, tore her garment and shook her white fat breasts in despair; she gave a roar with her mouth wide open, fell down only to rise again more stately and tragically than before, every inch a groaning queen in the carefully dishevelled arrangement of her garments.

Even the old generals had lost their heads; they stamped and thundered at each other. Alexander alone stood motionless, surrounded by his friends. With an absent, but mysteriously radiant look he followed Pausanias as they dragged him away. Then he allowed his gaze, still radiant, to fall on his father who was being freed of his mask; blood and dirt had already been removed. He was provisionally laid out on the golden chariot on which he had taken his last scandalous excursion. Lady Cleopatra threw herself over the corpse, spreading out her white arms with a beautiful motion. Alexander's eye, which scanned all this, grew ever darker and more impenetrable.

Gradually a smile spread over his calm face. The friends around him cried more enthusiastically than ever: "Long live Alexander, our King! Huzza! Huzza for our young King!" When he heard these cries, Alexander smiled, not indeed for the people, but for himself; he was quite bewitched.

As they lifted him on their shoulders, he greeted his people for the first time with a large, radiant gesture. Many were still standing around Philip's corpse, lamenting him, but the others were already acclaiming the young man who was now their leader. It was especially the twenty-year-olds who turned quickly away from the dead man. These Alexander greeted with the gesture that spoke of certain victory and with a smile that seemed to them divine.

When he finally stood on terra firma again, he felt a firm, yet tender hand on his shoulder. He turned around and looked into merry and expressive eyes, opalescently grey. "Come!" said Clitus to him. "Your mother awaits you anxiously!"

## V

Olympias received her son alone and with great solemnity in the vaulted hall in the centre of the palace; it was adorned with frescoes by Zeuxis, Philip's bride. She was sitting in the middle of the hall on a throne, but not in a royal robe, in state or adorned, but rather dishevelled as always, with ruffled obstinate hair. With broad, lowered forehead she

looked at the Prince with her seductive and expressive eyes. As he nimbly approached her, bowing to kiss her brow and hand, she smiled, but in more than a motherly way.

Alexander stopped in front of her, he waited respectfully for what she might have to say. She scanned his figure, at first not tenderly but rather searchingly; only gradually did her look grow tender. Alexander, his head on one side, maintained a patient silence until she should have thoroughly appraised him.

At last she took her eye off him, stood erect, and raised her arms. "We have got there at last," she declaimed at the arched ceiling with her half growling, half radiant voice, and again, more softly, but still more radiantly: "We have got there, Alexander!"

Whereupon she drew him to her with a vehemence which frightened and bewitched him. "Listen!" she whispered close to his face—he smelt the odour of her ruffled hair, her excited breath, an irresistibly bitter scent of herbs and all manner of dried herbs—, "Listen: *now I will give you your commission.*" What was coming? Alexander held his breath, and awaited her decisive word with all the fervour he possessed.

But she began in a dreamy and vague way. "There

were times," she said mysteriously as on a previous occasion when she had told Alexander about the dismembered Orpheus, "happy, peaceful times, when the world was managed in a better way than we poor folks know it, when man lived his life simply and contentedly, until the solemn hour of his death. Then, my son, it was woman who ruled, and man was subject to her. We women are gentler, cleverer, more industrious than you are, we know too, more about the gods. Under our rule the world was very nearly paradise."

Alexander looked at her beseechingly: The commission! But Olympias did not hurry. She went on leisurely: "The rule of man soon destroyed everything good that we had built up in the course of centuries.—Philip combined in himself all the bad masculine qualities, he was *the* man, that is why I hated him.—It is a good thing that you are not really his son." She gave a knowing smile.

Alexander flew at her, he forgot all ceremony, seized her shoulders, and screamed rudely in her face: "Not his son, Olympias?! I do not believe one word—" He was really afraid she was crazy, for she was shaking her head with a queer smile: "Not his

son," with a quiet obstinacy. "The gods be thanked that he is dead, it was my greatest wish," she said simply, almost with tenderness. Then in a firm and happy, yet dispassionate voice, she added, her radiant face turned towards Alexander: "*For now you are my son.*" She took both his hands, not a vestige of dreaminess remaining, and spoke plainly and joyously: "This year Philip would have undertaken the expedition to Asia; but for what purpose? To get Macedonian colonies in Asia, if it were at all possible; to force his impious and masculinely clumsy belief in the gods on these peoples, the most broad-minded and mature of all, to make the whole world still more unhappy than it already is to-day, under the rule of man." She shuddered at this thought. "It is really a good thing that he is dead!" She repeated with finality, and again she turned dramatically to her son.

"But you, Alexander, are to receive the commission from your mother. Go on an expedition to Asia, it will surrender affectionately to you, for you are beautiful, grandson of Achilles! Motherly Asia will obey you, for you have a commission from your mother. This commission is not that you shall conquer, men have conquered so much. A wedding shall be prepared—"



As she jumped up, he saw that her countenance was bathed in tears. Then he too cried, as if he were still the child that loved to listen to fairy tales. Amid many tears mother and son made their compact in the solemn atmosphere of the deserted banqueting hall. "I will come to Babylon and become Empress when you have won the victory!" she said, her moist face laid against his equally moist. "When you are dead, I will take over the reins of government alone, this must be clearly set forth in your will. For you will not live very long." With half-closed eyes she once more examined his young face and, this time strangely coquettish, almost maliciously: "You will not live very long," she said. Then she cried again, drawing him closer to her.

And once more Alexander, stupefied, heard her magical whispering in his ear: "You yourself will not live very long, my sweet son, I am not even sure that you will ever be happy. But you have been chosen to bring happiness to humanity, my Alexander! I and the mystic gods, we both desire it, Alexander! You will compel it with your beauty, with your youth. For you are young, Alexander, that, you see, is the wonderful thing—" Her words ceased in his mouth, she kissed him, and into her kiss she whispered so that it

was hardly audible: "Of course I was not innocent of the death of this Philip—I had arranged it with Clitus—little Pausanias was told to—"

Here Alexander released his hold of her, she ought not to have said as much. She too, realized that she had gone too far, and again she sat on the throne, a completely dignified queen, with unapproachably lowered lids. To the Prince, who made a low bow, she tendered her hand for his kiss. "You know the will of your mother," she said over him in an icy tone. He raised himself, they looked sternly into each other's eyes. The most important thing had to be left unsaid: he did not ask after Clitus who secretly governed his fate. All he said with punctuated politeness was: "Your will has been mine from all time."

They parted solemnly.

Philip is dead, and with brilliant exuberance do the activities of the new king commence. Had there already been rejoicings in Athens? Had the poor little assassin of the King been made an honorary citizen *in absentia*? Had they uttered sighs of relief when it was believed there was already an end to the new irksome hegemony? Athens was preparing for war,

and with Aetolians and Ambraciots, the Elans and the Arcadians.

On his throne the much hated youth is surrounded by danger on all sides; everywhere there is a conspiracy against him: in Hellas among the barbarians of the North, in Asia and even at his own Court. The ill-advised Attalus with his common, sensuous mouth set in a large, scrubby, pointed beard, lately returned from Asia Minor, is weaving his web, probably as far as Susa and Babylon. Philip's well-tried generals are seen whispering maliciously together: more especially Parmenion, whose hair has turned grey with hard work, has a portentous expression on his face. The name of one prince Amyntas, son of old king Perdiccas is mentioned again and again: to him did the throne rightfully belong, for only as his guardian had Philip taken over the reins of government.

Cleopatra, widow of the murdered monarch, stalks about with becoming sorrow, she meets her young stepson with an offended dignity. In more intimate circles she carefully discloses the fact that she considers Olympias and her son in no way innocent of the murder of the great Philip.—Arrhidaeus too, the melancholy whore's son, has his party.

In this medley Alexander is seized with a veritable craving for action. Friends advise caution, warn him, point to obstacles, lovingly and anxiously. In long evening talks Hephaestion puts before him the obvious danger of his position. "They are all against you, East and West, Greece and Macedonia, all are banded against you." Alexander laughs radiantly.

Before embarking on his campaigns, he seeks advice from the Amphictionic Council of the Thermopylæ; he renews the alliance with Corinth and allows homage to be paid to him as the "absolute Commander-in-Chief of all the Hellenes." Thus this man, to the amazement of every nation, succeeded his father when he was barely twenty.

Hour by hour and minute by minute there ripens in his heart the great scheme of his life; he realizes and develops it, it causes him to wake up at night and smile with happiness; it gives a resonance to his voice and a light to his eye.—It is true that many matters have first to be settled; around Macedonia the peoples which had become rebellious, need to be assuaged. With Thessalonica he quickly becomes reconciled; but there are others: Thracians, Getaeans, Tribalians, Illyrians. He conquers the Tribalians who had at one

time impertinently attacked Philip, beating their ruler Symus without losing a single man; at the pass of Pelion he conquers the Illyrians.

As he is wounded, he is believed in Athens to be already dead; again there is rejoicing and preparation; wicked old Demosthenes, because nothing now matters, accepts three hundred talents from the Great King. Suddenly Alexander appears before Thebes. As the town offers stubborn resistance, it is made to suffer horribly; in Athens they tell shudderingly of firebrands, dismembered corpses and desecrated sanctuaries. Everyone looks with veneration and fear at this youth with his big, haunting eyes and radiant brow; even Demosthenes begins dimly to guess what tempestuous power is here at work. So Athens makes peace.

The most necessary things have been done; with unparalleled impatience Alexander throws himself into preparations for the fantastic undertaking which his mind wills. He arranges, decides, organizes. An easy excuse was found for murdering Attalus on a charge of high treason; Amyntas too, had been done away with; Arrhidaeus alone has been spared by the young King. nobody knows why. Olympias, revelling in her power, orders Cleopatra to be throttled, for she was

her worst enemy and rival; she has the embryo wrenched from her womb and burns it with horrible imprecations.

With a brutality of which no one suspected him, Alexander orders everything according to his desire. Nobody now sees him gay or melancholy any more, even with Hephaestion he is objective and brief. His eyes have lost their almost black, concentrated and hard, shining look of which his *entourage* was afraid. Around his mouth are steel muscles.

As regards his foreign plans, the motive for his Asiatic campaign is the pan-Hellenic thought of revenge: What Xerxes has done to the Greeks, Macedonia will avenge on Darius Codomannus. He declares that he is executing Philip's last will and only carrying out what he had planned. But he is actually getting further and further away from Philip's ideals. His father desired only that which was sensible, within bounds, whereas he is attracted only by the unlimited. Philip had in the first instance occupied himself with the geography of Asia Minor; Alexander is already studying the climatic conditions of Iran and getting news about Bactria and Sogdiana.

Ships are equipped. Troops are sent by Greece, Thessalia and Thracia. He, in the meantime, in a



drunken, impotent generosity, gives away almost everything that he has, his entire personal property, as if he wished forcibly to rid himself of every tie.

Parmenion with the cat-face and the faithful soldier's air, respectfully looking up from below, most deferentially remarked that to leave the country without an heir to the throne was in these so dangerous times quite unpardonable. He suggested several ladies of the best aristocracy, even foreign princesses, as a bride for the King, never forgetting the physical advantages of the maid in question, while on his face there was an indecent smile like that of an old man. The young King gave a sharp and contemptuous laugh and Hephaestion, at his side, laughed with him.

As the winter came to an end, King Alexander broke up for the Hellespont with an army of thirty thousand foot-soldiers. Of his mother he took only a formal farewell, in the presence of a few officers. Since their decisive conversation, he had not talked with her alone.

Antipater was appointed Regent.

They marched over Amphipolis along the coast, over Abdera, Maroneia, and Cardia, reaching Sestus

on the twentieth day. The fleet was awaiting them in the Hellespont. Troy was on the other side.

Alexander, standing in the bow of the ship, was dreaming with his eyes wide open. These dreams grew to be too overpowering, he had to speak about them. So he attempted an explanation, his voice trembling with fear, saying he could not make himself clear, but only hint at things which no one understood.

“If this undertaking is successful, Hephaestion, then the goal of humanity is reached. Blood will flow, but the goal will be reached.—Oh, Hephaestion—” He stopped, for already he noticed that the other understood nothing of what he said. He noticed that he was alone as always. Loneliness made him humble and no longer proud; he sought to get nearer to him who stood beside him, a stranger.

Hephaestion saw how in the animated darkness Alexander’s head was inclining towards him. They both had a taste of the salty water on their lips. Behind the clouds, flying along in detached fragments, the spring storms tearing through them, a few solitary stars appeared in a pale light.

“But you must help me,” said Alexander beseech-

ingly, suddenly trying to suppress his tears, his forehead against Hephaestion's cool one.

The latter replied gently and firmly, as if reminding him of his duty: "It is the hour which makes you tender. You know you do not need my help. For you, Alexander are strongest by yourself! I would only disturb you—" He grew silent, moved by his own renunciation and gentleness, unaware of how the renunciation affected the other man.

Alexander's heated face, with a frame of curls intertwined like snakes, withdrew. In the morning light it seemed to grow rigid and of a livid pallor. His mouth grew hard, and wrinkles appeared on his beautiful brow.

This was the second time that he had been rejected. "Now I will offer myself no more," he thought, at peace after his exuberance.

As Hephaestion felt for his hand, he left it to him, but without returning the pressure of the other. He turned his now stern look towards the water, which paled and curled shiveringly.

# Victory

## I

They offered sacrifices to Zeus who is the guardian of landings, to Heracles and finally to Athene of Ilia: to the latter Alexander dedicated all his weapons, though taking by way of a pious, but advantageous barter, all the sacred weapons from the treasure in her temple. Among these was the shield which was said to have belonged to Achilles, whom the King called his forebear.

On this morning an enthusiastic *camaraderie* bound Alexander to his young generals as well as to his men, who were equally young. They all loved each other; none of them was older than twenty-five, and the year was only just starting,—the campaign would be a great one.

They played about like boys; whoever proved the strongest was decorated with flowers. They rejoiced to feel the sun on their bodies, and shivered happily in the wind which blew from the sea.

Their cheers reached a climax when the young King stepped out of his tent with his friends. They had left their clothes inside, they were naked: Alexander, Clitus and Hephaestion, Colnus, Philotas, Cra-

terus and Perdiccas. The army was beside itself, their leaders were beautiful and strong as demi-gods.

Their bodies were trained in the gymnasium and had grown brown. Naked they moved even more freely and more naturally than in their leather war-tunics; they stretched themselves, laughed, and suddenly threw themselves upon one another and began to wrestle. Two couples were in the skirmish, the others watched them, applauding, encouraging or scolding when one of them broke the rules.

It was not for nothing that they were young Greeks, soon they took the contest seriously. Slender Clitus, whose agility was considered doubtful, defeated the irascible and hairy-black Philotas who was strong as a bear and ground his teeth; his father Parmenion did likewise under his grey beard.—After a valiant fight Craterus who was too scrupulous in his use of the legitimate holds, was defeated by Perdiccas, who was not so particular.

After their wrestling-bout they started throwing the discus, and then began the races.

Alexander and Clitus were the fastest, so they had to run together. Quite half the army was passionately interested.

It seemed as if Alexander was going to win. He ran,

it was observed, with the exertion of all his powers, panting, his eyes darkened and jaw firmly set. Clitus, entirely without effort, kept his pace a few yards behind the King. He overtook him only a second before they reached the goal; Alexander noticed it, panted still more and made one last great effort. There was no question about it, Clitus had practically won. Then, two metres before the goal, he slowed down; at the last moment, the crowd shouting with excitement, he allowed the other to pass him and arrive first.

Even those standing closest had hardly become aware that Clitus had *allowed* Alexander to win, out of pity, or politeness, or mockery; and that he himself could have won, and that without panting. He stood on one side, cunning and joyous, while the King was being greeted with solemn cheers.

Alexander, who knew what had happened, thanked them with a slight bow, not daring to look at Clitus again.

Everywhere they were wrestling, jumping, running. A number had run to the sea and they were heard yelling and shouting with joy, as they splashed one another. They embraced one another, so elated did they feel in their self-confidence, their youth and the lovely weather.

Never before had they, this crowd thrown together politically and accidentally, felt themselves so patriotic as Greeks, so at one with each other. But he who was their leader, the youth, he was more than a man.

They saw him, their Alexander, wandering about arm in arm with his friend Hephaestion, and then they could only imagine it to be Achilles with Patroclus. Alexander's body was lighter in colour, more muscular and elastic than that of Hephaestion, which was brownish, a little more supple and inclined to a voluptuous heaviness. The couple turned round in astonishment when they were cheered. Hephaestion smiled gratefully, for he heard them calling him Patroclus, and he blushed and looked bashfully to the ground. Alexander, whom they greeted with enthusiastic cheers as Achilles, thanked them, raising his hand solemnly; then he bowed and smiled.

It is true that no one noticed the hasty and secret side-glance with which he wished to discover whether Clitus was watching the scene. But the latter sat hidden somewhere playing with flowers and spinning stones of his own imagining.

At night most of them slept in the open, some lying arm in arm and in pairs. They breathed peacefully after the glorious adventures of the day.



Nor was the slumber of the young leaders in their tents any less peaceful. They dreamt of romantic wars, the scene of which was that of their bouts of the past day; many a man had his Homer under his pillow with his dagger.—But they also dreamt of still greater wars, of which they would become the even more romantic heroes.

Alexander alone was restless, and sat up peering bitterly into the dark.

*“Why did he let me get ahead of him? It is bad enough that he can beat me; but his not doing it— O Clitus—Clitus—”*

During the life-time of his cousin Artaxerxes Ochus, who was as cruel as he was clever, Darius Codomannus was first Director of the Postal Service, then satrap of Armenia. After the demoniacal half-caste Bagoas from Egypt had first assassinated the Great King Ochus, whose plaything and favourite he was, and then his successor Arses, the crown passed to Darius, who was descended from a side line of Achaemeneids. The only action he performed in his life was when he gently, but with implacable courtesy, invited the corpulent and terrible Bagoas himself to

drink a cup of poison which he, soon after ascending the throne, had placed before Darius—and which Bagoas had perforce to do. Codomannus, pensive and disinterested, had watched the fat monster die before his eyes in convulsions.

Darius was inclined to be melancholy and idyllic, but if anything was at stake, neither weak nor sentimental: rather showing at such a time a cruelty which was as quiet as it was decided; from this, however, he did not derive as much pleasure as his cousin Artaxerxes. Rather did it repel him when he had to proceed to torture or executions; instead of satisfaction he experienced disgust, although only of rather a transient order.

He consoled himself with flowers and learned conversations. He was profoundly devoted to his mother Sisygambis, an energetic old lady, who on her part despised him a little; and with chivalrous tenderness to his pretty and melancholy young wife who had presented him with two daughters.

The Great King was not majestic in appearance, somewhat dumpy and almost small, with too large a circumference to his head, which he held thoughtfully on one side, then he had pensive, but vacant eyes of a beautiful brown.

As a young man his life had not been pleasant, the Postal Service brought a great deal of worry with it, and as satrap of Armenia the mountain people of Cardusia had become troublesome to him. As his power of resistance was not very great, the forty-year-old man was already beginning to feel tired; the affairs of his enormous realm which stretched from the Indus to the Greek sea, from Jaxartes to the Lybian desert, and which he hardly knew at all, did not interest him very seriously. He allowed the governors to carry on as they liked, which they did with equanimity and to the bitter sorrow of the various populations; for the rest he depended on his Greek soldiers with whose assistance Artaxerxes had already suppressed the Egyptian revolt, and on the troops of horsemen which the less civilized countries placed at his disposal.

The sudden advance of Philip's troops into his territory of Asia Minor had roused and frightened him considerably. He left the defence of the Empire to Greek hirelings and their supreme command to the Rhodian Memnon, whose tenacious skill he valued. After a brief period of time he could breathe more freely and offer thanks to the Ahura-Mazda: Philip

was assassinated,—and the Macedonian troops departed.

Now what would this Alexander do, he who was said to be very young and to have uncanny eyes? The Great King had a restless night; the following morning he summoned the great men of his realm to a conference.

He received them with pompous ceremony, although with a pale complexion. His heavily padded coat, which reached to his feet and was made to measure, gave him a clumsy, awkward appearance; he also had a cylindrical cap, a beard carefully curled, heavy ear-pendants, and in his left hand the traditional long staff, in his right a flower which he twiddled nervously.

Besides Memnon, several influential gentlemen were expected; these belonged partly to the splendour of the Court, partly had they come to Babylonia for business or pleasure: Arsites, the Governor of Phrygia and Hellespont, Spithridates, the Governor of Lydia and Ionai, Atizyes of greater Phrygia, Mithrobuzanes of Cappadocia and Omares; the latter who came of an old family, was considered particularly aristocratic. They rattled in with their black

beards, bedecked with purple and gold; the obligatory bending of the knee before Darius they indicated more than executed, Memnon alone, the Greek, taking demonstrative pains, touched the ground at his master's feet with his forehead while the latter cleared his throat nervously.

The Great King had an extraordinarily superficial and absent-minded way of putting the facts before his counsellors, who of course knew them already, and showed it with half-anxious, mostly derisive side-glances among themselves; only Memnon, his knitted brow lowered, had a proud and completely detached air.—“In short, this young Macedonian is threatening my kingdom,” said the monarch, thus abruptly ending his explanations with an impatience which took them by surprise.

At this point his counsellors were bold enough to contradict him. There could certainly be no talk of “threatening,” they opined severely. Rather were they concerned with a young upstart who was indeed exceptionally forward, but lacked all other attributes. They would need to prove to him quickly and energetically,—and this was a question of honour,—what would be the consequences of an arrogant attack on Persian territory.

The self-satisfied orations of his knights seemed quickly to bore and to fatigue the King; he nodded and said nothing, sometimes he glanced anxiously at Memnon who was biting his lip, his yellow beardless face otherwise motionless gazing with a detached air to the ground.

After endless verbiage, the subject of which was Persia's greatness in general, they at last came to the practical part of the debate: to the battle which they were to wage with Alexander, what troops were to be used, what terrain was considered the most advantageous. At this point, Memnon joined in, he made clear and definite proposals, and soon he alone was directing and dominating the discussion. Thereupon Darius too became more lively.

Only when the problem arose of who should take over the supreme command did the Greek general cease. After a pause of extreme awkwardness the Great King himself, in a tremulous voice, proposed Memnon; but the others immediately voiced their objection.

A foreigner, they opined excitedly, should not be entrusted with the command of an army which was to defend their national honour, that was going too far. Memnon, who knew he was hated, was again looking

around, frigid and aloof, biting his lower lip and saying nothing.

The final result was that several generals were jointly to assume the supreme command: in addition to Memnon, Arsites, Spithridates and several more.

Memnon accepted with a brief motion of his hand, but the King appeared dissatisfied: he had no confidence in anyone but the taciturn, elegant and crafty Greek.

On the same day, in order to show the people that the Court was in good humour, the Great King organized a particularly brilliant procession: he appeared in wide, purple trousers, his tiara adorned with a diadem of precious stones. His decorated coach was preceded by one hundred riderless horses, and followed by another hundred, while slaves ran alongside.

By the river Granicus Alexander faced the Persian forces. He decided swiftly that he would attack.

Old Parmenion pointing out the situation to him warns him that the enemy forces are infinitely superior, twenty thousand cavalry, they say, and the same number of Greek hirelings, and foot-soldiers; the terrain with its steep river banks would prove most unpropitious for the attacking side.

“Follow my advice!” concludes the vigorous and



careful old man. "Postpone the first and decisive battle!"

Alexander, full of tense impatience and eager for the outcome of the first battle, dismisses his advice with a wave of his hand in arrogant impatience: "I have conquered the Hellespont, should I then fear this little brook?"—To the old man who had grown grey in honour, this retort seemed irrelevant and therefore insulting: he retired offended.

On the other side it is Memnon who advises against the engagement. His instinct warns him that Alexander, as full of energy as he is to-day, will force a victory and on any terrain. A few weeks hence, muses the old Greek, this fighter will not be as strong.

But the Persian officers scoff at this prudence. This was the last straw: to await events and then to retire! The Macedonians should know of what stuff they were made, it was in any case high time they should. Such speeches caused Memnon to lower his eye-lids conceitedly. Against his express advice furthermore, and solely from motives of national vanity and boastfulness, the Persian cavalry was placed in the front, hard by the shore, whilst the Greek soldiers were ordered to occupy a position further back.

Alexander himself led the Macedonian attack, they

recognized him on the opposite side by the white plume on his helmet, as it waved in the wind. He and his young soldiers forded the raging stream with war-songs, and behind them came the noisy trumpeters, confident of victory.

He and his young soldiers shouted for joy of the battle. They were just as merry as they had been a few days ago at their games, only now their merriness was of a wilder kind, ready for death.

Javelins and arrows greeted them from the steep banks, twenty-five Macedonian cavalrymen fell in the attack.

But the precipitous bank was taken by the others with such enthusiastic violence, that the superior forces of Persia retired in dismay. The hand-to-hand fighting on the slippery wet ground of the slope grew more and more frightful. Many fell into the water, and the narrow bed of the stream was filled with corpses.

Wherever Alexander's white feather was to be seen, the fighting was the more concentrated and fierce; the crooked swords of the Persians and the light spears of the Macedonians drove into each other, and got tied up in the form of a movable roof and railing, which gave shade to the heads of the heated com-

batants.—Alexander laughed in heroic exuberance, for his weapon was cleft in two; an officer threw him his, as if they were playing ball.

With this the King threw from his steed the Persian Cavalry General, galloping towards him and snorting more loudly than his steaming beast. A noisy comrade of his then took up the fight by way of avenging him. Alexander received him with his swishing blows.

His borrowed sword was still in the wound of the second attacker when a third was already seen to swing his sword behind him. Alexander noticed directly over him, the flash of something crooked; before he had had time to take fright, it had descended. The man who had wielded it fell with his weapon. Alexander saw him drop sideways from the steed; he roared hoarsely, more furious than complaining, almost cursing. It was the man who had almost killed him; now a stream of blackish blood gushed from out of the embroidery of his garment.

After thus escaping death, Alexander felt a hand on his shoulder, and he knew whose pressure it was: it was affectionate and firm. He obeyed it, and allowed himself to be led out of the tumult without a murmur. He thought dreamily to himself as he was riding

along: this hand is brownish and muscular; rather slim, with firm and noble wrists, light finger-nails which run to a point. Now it has actually saved my life.

When he looked into Clitus' face, it was full of earnestness; so collected, so inscrutable as Alexander had only once before seen it: on that night when the fateful "You are disturbing me very much" had been spoken. "What is going on behind this brow?" the rescued man thought in his agony of mind.

Simultaneously he said—and now they were already out of the battle, although arrows were still whistling about them—: "You have saved my life. How would you like me to thank you?"

Clitus, lowering his forehead, his knavish gallantry suddenly returning, said with his inexplicable smile which could be interpreted in a hundred different ways:

"You thank me, Alexander, by being alive."

The twenty-five cavalrymen who fell in the attack were given bronze statues by Lysippus. Three hundred complete suits of armour were sent to Athens as an offering to Pallas Athene.

Alexander rapturously thanked his army, weeping for joy. "By this battle the power of the Great King has been destroyed as far as the Taurus. This is the beginning, my friends, now we are irresistible."

## II

Memnon, as a Greek and as an aristocrat, hated Alexander with a personally bitter and burning hatred. To him he was nothing but a revolutionary upstart, whose semi-barbarian appearance causes disorder. Nor could he forgive his father and him the incident of Chæronea, still less the pardon which was at that time granted to Athens and which he found humiliating, while the democratic town, which had grown vulgar, tendered its thanks to their indulgent conquerors.

To Syrphax, the chief of the Persian garrison in Ephesus, he said contemptuously: "Dreamers like these have always brought misfortune when they ventured into the world of reality. After their dictatorship comes chaos.—I am all for lesser tyrants," he said, and looked at Syrphax insultingly. "They do keep order."

It was evident that he despised his new friends; the latter however, were unaware of it. They clung to Memnon as to a saviour; for their power began everywhere to waver. With the coming of Alexander a new feeling of liberty swept across the country which had been oppressed for so long a time. Ionia awakened, and the oligarchy—whose tendency was toward Persia, seemed to be finished, thanks to this terrible Macedonian youth.

In Ephesus the gentlemen went on with their amusements as far as possible; Memnon in his bitter mirth, joined them. The sacred treasure of Artemis was plundered, and Philip's statue overthrown and besmirched; in the intervals they attended floggings and executions.

To disturb their composure, there arrived day after day the most unpleasant news; Sardes, the residence of the Lydian satrapy, had opened its gates to the conqueror, who appeared with the sign of peace; Mithrines himself, the Persian Commander of the garrison, stood outside the town with the notabilities, ceremoniously to receive the intruder.

"The people shouted for joy," Memnon related to Syrphax and his friends, as they were assembled round him. They grinned contemptuously. Here the

people were now only heard whining and complaining.

One misfortune after another hit the gentlemen of Ephesus: Tralles and Magnesia had surrendered voluntarily; everywhere, in Chios and the Island of Lesbos, the rule of the aristocrat was being abolished.

"We are in the centre of an earthquake," said Memnon whose countenance waxed more and more yellow. He bit his lower lip, staring bitterly before him. "On top of which all this is superfluous," he declared with a pained obstinacy. "The battle of Granicus could have been won. It is Persian vanity which has spoilt everything."

What did his discoveries avail the smaller dictators who sat upon the earthquake? They felt very morbidly squeamish in their skins. Memnon still had the energy to be sarcastic, but his friends did not laugh any more. The streets of Ephesus had become alive. The storm was approaching.

"Alexander is said to be so beautiful," declared the yellow Memnon with a sarcasm which his comrades considered inappropriate at this point, "that even the enemy on the run must turn round and look at him when he is behind them. It will therefore be delightful for you to get to know him."



He himself departed, it was said to Halicarnassus.

Syrphax hardly dared to venture into the street, or the rabble of Ephesus began to raise cheers as the rabble of Sardis had done before: for everyone knew that the Macedonian army was approaching.

"The liberator is coming!" yelled the rabble, while Syrphax trembled and sobbed in his palace, all surrounded by a cheering mob. "This is open revolution," whined the little man who had once held his head so high and so proud. "Will Persia then not come to my assistance? I have always acted in the interest of the Great King."

As Persia did not come, he sought refuge in the Temple of Artemis which only a few days before he had plundered. The people were not in a devotional frame of mind and he was torn from the altar. Stones were even thrown, and to such good effect that the little tyrant fell in a heap. They laughed at his last comic death-struggles and their laughter blended with sounds of greater rejoicing.

"The liberator has come!"

At the head of a column of cavalry the youth on the white steed is so smothered in flowers that he is hardly recognizable. He rides without his helmet; his curly, soft, red-blond hair thrown back from his brow

with a defiant air. The women rave about this hair, the women who throw flowers. "It has a purple hue," they whisper in their ecstasy. "And how young he looks. His mouth is like a child's. And what soft cheeks."

"But his mouth can also be severe," others whisper respectfully. "One can tell by his eyes."

He paid homage to the mother of the gods with a great sacrificial offering; this was his first act in Ephesus, and his entire army had to be present with great ceremony. It is true that previously he had spent many hours alone with her.

He knew more about her than most of her worshippers did. The story of her holiness went back to the dim, dark ages of Egypt. Olympias had taken him back to where the maiden whom the Greeks called Artemis, becomes identified with the Asiatic mother who loses her lover and her son, weeps over them and sees them resuscitated.

With the Ephesian godhead Olympias' son felt a double and secret tie since, on the night of his birth, she had spoken to him by means of the most awful signs. The fire with which she had adorned herself on that night, knit her for ever to Alexander.

The latter stood with her for a long time, his eyes

fixed upon hers. A silent intercourse seemed to be taking place between them. Was some commission being renewed, or solemnly repeated, or given a second time?

His own portrait which Alexander had painted for himself by Apelles, he dedicated to the temple of the goddess. It represented the young conqueror with a radiant gesture, swinging lightning from his hand. But the gesture with which he offered it to the goddess and put it up, was humble.

He remained in Ephesus a few days, settling and arranging matters. Everyone who came to him with a request was given an ear: everything down to the smallest detail fascinated and interested him.

A few days after the great sacrificial feast the King broke up with his army for Milet.

He reported to his mother:

"Since my stay in Ephesus and my visit to the Great Mother I feel stronger than ever.

"Asia Minor rejoices at my presence, they had grown weary of the Persian rule. It is coming true, Olympias, it is all coming true!"

After the conquest of Milet Alexander dissolved his fleet; in this way he gave up the idea of forcing an

issue with Persia on the high seas. "They may be superior to us on the ocean," he said to his confidants when informing them of his decision. "Our victorious march must not be spoilt by the blemish of a defeat. I want to conquer lands, and liberate land, not water."

Halicarnassus in Caria, which was the key to the Aegean, became increasingly important. The remnant of the Persian forces in Asia Minor had assembled in this famous and well fortified city.

At the entrance to the Carian Empire he was received by a lively and exuberantly inclined lady, Countess Ada, who maintained that she was the lawful ruler of the Carian State, and had been shamefully deceived by her crafty relative Othontopates, who was now awaiting Alexander at Halicarnassus, fully prepared for battle.

Countess Ada was so extraordinarily talkative that everyone who listened to her gasped. She wore costlily, although rather slovenly clothes, and had a lively, aristocratically mutton-chop face with a long nose, watery light eyes and a babbling mouth. She immediately and as a matter of course regarded Alexander as her saviour, thanking him in advance in her chattering way.

"You are too kind," she said gushingly, as soon as

she was introduced to him. "These fellows have been tormenting me." And she told him her family history as connectedly as she could; it was as dismal as it was complicated.

"It ought to have been my turn!" she cried, concluding her entangled novel which dealt with the fates of her ancestors, cousins and aunts. "I also came for a few months, but then my brother Pixodarus dethroned me. Oh ye gods, what a scoundrel! Your clever father wanted to put him in an awkward position with this idiot Arrhidaeus. Then finally Pixodarus also died, but do you think I got my rights? Othontopates came and took what was mine by right; to me he gave what? The mountain fortress Alinda! The mountain fortress! Oh ye gods!"

Ada could not console herself over this fortress, again and again she cried "Alinda!", raising her eyes disconsolately to the heavens.—In a naïve and affectionate way she confided in the young hero who had left Pella solely to help her and obtain justice for her.

Alexander thought her quaint and amiable, and he was not a little flattered by the unconditional confidence she placed in him; so he treated her with a slightly ironical courtesy. She on her part insisted on showering gifts and delicacies upon him; every day

she sent him fine dishes, baskets and bowls of sweetmeats and roasts, preserves and fresh foods, tender and prickly fruit, all kinds of sweets, perfumes and knick-knacks; oily fats, dainties, nourishing and all sorts of unexpected things. Alexander enjoyed himself and sent her coquettish messages of thanks.

"I believe she wants to marry me," he said to Hephaestion with a grin, nibbling at a piece of almond cake. But she had planned something more unusual, she wanted to adopt him. This idea he thought so crazy that he consented. "One can never have enough mothers," he asserted, and allowed her to kiss his brow and cheeks.

Moreover, he made use of his relations with her for political purposes: now he could say that he was fighting for her rights when attacking Halicarnassus.

Behind the walls of the city Memnon was working away and making plans with more energy and wisdom than Othontopates, who was the official governor.

"We must hold this town to the last—to the very last," he exhorted them again and again when discussing the possibilities of defence with the leaders and counsellors and engineers. "With its three forts

it is practically impregnable. Never forget that it constitutes our last point of support in Asia Minor; *the last point of support in our organized warfare.*" he warned them. "When that falls, there will be no stopping the deluge."

But the deluge was irresistible, and all the trenches and fortifications which Memnon had constructed were of no avail. "Then let him conquer nothing more than a heap of ashes," said the implacable general. And setting fire to the town, he withdrew with Othontopates and the troops to the Island of the King's palace.

"This is the second Greek town which we are burning for him," he declared with barbarous satisfaction. "First Thebes, now Halicarnassus. Thus does the liberator of Greece demonstrate his mission. There behold his liberty," and he pointed mockingly to the sea of flames. "It was his wish. It is chaos!"

"Is this the liberty which I desired to spread?" thought Alexander, as he made his entry amidst crashing buildings. "The second town of Greece which has been burnt in my name——"

He was still lord over Caria, and Ada received her satrapy. She wept for joy and embraced her liberator



and son many times and most affectionately, for she had not been deceived in him; he even allowed her the revenues of the province which were magnificent.

“You are good!” she sobbed again and again. “You are so good, Alexander!” He nodded pensively, almost sadly. Nevertheless he seemed comforted by her lively chatter and her implicit faith in him.

He was even able to arrange for those of his soldiers who were newly married and had young wives at home, to return home to their beloved in Macedonia and Greece, and this gave rise to many jokes and spicy taunts.

Parmenion was ordered to march to Dardes with a section of the troops, and there to spend the winter. Thus the old man was out of the skirmish for the present. Alexander himself set out for the interior of Asia Minor, planning to take Lycia which had been under Persian rule since the days of Cyrus.

In how many towns does he ride on his white Bucephalus through gates decorated with garlands? How many times is he received amid a shower of

blossoms, the cheers of men and boys, and the amorous whispers of women: "How young he looks.—He has a mouth like a child's and such soft cheeks.—Look, he does not wear a helmet; how curly and red-blond is his hair.—Look, he throws it back from his brow with such grand defiance.—One can hardly see his face, he is so smothered in flowers.—Did you hear that his face is said to be so beautiful that the retreating enemy have to turn round and look at him.—But one can see his eyes, between the flowers—"

Was he ever in real danger? The attempt made on his life by Alexandrus Lyncestius, a doubtful young man and son-in-law to Antipater, who had been heavily bribed by the Persians, was discovered. The soldiers rejoiced. "No daggers can ever wound the favourite of the gods!"

In the smaller towns which surrendered to him, great feasts were organized. They drank and lay with women, and at night Alexander and his friends went singing to the market-place to decorate with flowers the effigy of Theodectes, a Greek poet.

The night was warm, and sent them out of its lovely darkness a warm rain which moistened their hair and their faces. They embraced and laid their wet faces one against the other.

## III

Memnon reports thus to the Great King in Susa. "ALEXANDER'S victories on the mainland are indisputable. I trust that your Majesty has been well informed on this point. Sagalossus has actually fallen, and Celaenae, the residence of the Phrygian governors, has surrendered voluntarily.

"In all this may be seen the accidental successes of a bold adventurer whose game has been made easy by our own mistakes. As things are at present, his own downfall is assured if we leave him to win a few more victories and conquer a few more lands in the heart of Asia Minor, while we retrieve what he has already seized on the coast. In this way we shall cut him off from Macedonia.

"It would at the same time be advisable to reinforce our agents in Greece. Alexander's position as a permanent one is untenable if the hatred of the motherland increases against him. In Sparta a revolution seems imminent. In Athens they are growing ill-tempered, for Alexander is treating the illustrious town with less consideration than his father did. He has just flatly and without giving any reason turned down

the request of the Athenians that the prisoners of Granicus be set free.”

His report was pithy and detailed, it was also honest in contrast to the reports of the Court, and his proposals were intelligent. Darius, who wanted to bring this business quickly to an end in order to give himself up once more to his idyllic mode of life, decided to give Memnon supreme power, which annoyed the Persian aristocracy beyond words.

Memnon was made Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet.

The great moment of his life had come, and he used it with a passionate energy. His face, which had been wrinkled and old-looking, became vigorous once more; it was still yellowish in colour, but now ten years younger. Ambition and hatred made his step elastic.

He realized that he was alone with his plans and deliberations. The Persians, who surrounded him, wished him ill. The only one who enjoyed any sort of confidential position was Pharnabazus, his rather insignificant nephew.

By his intrigue and machinations which were planned on a large scale, as well as by the alarming majesty of his fleet Memnon succeeded in re-taking for

Persia, Chios, Lesbos, and many other towns. Mytilene alone would not surrender.

He resolved to besiege this city.

On the third day he felt a fever coming upon him. Something in him decreased, he could not understand the cause of his languor and inertness: They must be heralds of a serious illness. Had someone in his *entourage* poisoned him, perhaps a man whom Alexander had bribed, or an enemy from the Court? Or had the higher powers sent this heavy sickness upon him? Then the higher powers must be favourably disposed towards Alexander.—It was this thought which most tormented Memnon.

The following morning he was incapable of rising, he was tormented by shivering fits, every moment even clear thinking pained him. He called his nephew Pharnabazus to his couch. The good lad was quite overcome by the change in his uncle's appearance; finally he began to weep which made the sick man impatient. "Do not weep!" he said harshly, "I shall die in a few hours."

And once more, behind that heavily wrinkled brow his mind, which had done so much thinking, began to work. "If I had added Mytilene to my conquests, this Macedonian lad would have been lost. It would have

meant his end, his ruin. I am dying just at the right moment for him."

After a sorrowful pause he continued: "If one of these Persians has poisoned me, it is a sign from the gods that they are ready for destruction. Ready, ready, ready—," he yelled swaying his body about in his torture. "Now no one will resist the advance of this barbarian. My hatred of him cannot be rivalled by that of any Asiatic, only by that of a Greek. He is more the enemy of Greece than of Persia. He confuses everything, brings on chaos.—It is we who are chaste."

He lay back exhausted, his quince-yellow, aristocratic and worn face resting painfully. With the chin protruding in a point, his mouth seemed to fall together like that of an old man. Only his dark, passionate eyes showed that he was still thinking as relentlessly and passionately as ever.

With an effort he very quietly concluded his last great thought: "He is fortunate, this Alexander. It is the gods who make him fortunate." And with a sad brow, drooping forward, he said hopelessly, yet proudly: "I was the last of those he had to fear."

Then, with a tired and resigned solemnity he again

turned to his nephew who was listening anxiously: "I make you my successor," he said weakly. "Give the great King the assurance of my loyalty and devotion—"

It was in Gordium that Alexander received the news of his great opponent's death. It put him not in a joyful, but rather a solemn mood. Each new evidence of the favour of the gods moved him almost to tears. In lofty terms he told his mother of this new favour.

"The secret gods to whom you pray for me, have destroyed my worst enemy. They favour me with their benevolence because of their mission in the sense of which I am endeavouring to act."

That day in the Phrygian castle he was shown the sacred chariot in which Midas had driven among the people, so that in accordance with the statement of the oracle his divinity was not recognized. His attention was also drawn to the knot on the shaft which appeared to have been indissolubly tied with the bast of a cherry-tree, neither the beginning nor the end being visible. This knot, so went the prophecy, was to be untied by him who would become lord over Asia.

Alexander bent over it, examining it with his eyes



screwed together; he fingered it from all sides, and lastly he sniffed its odour. It smelt rather stale; it was an old knot, firmly entangled in itself. It was so old that it felt sticky; if one grasped it firmly, it would surely fall to pieces like a piece of ash. To untie it would be a horribly laborious business.

With a thoughtful and absent-minded air Alexander took his short sword from the scabbard; he poked and played about in the somewhat uninviting mass with the point of the metal; all of a sudden, when nobody was prepared for it, he cut into it: the knot crumbled to pieces and fell apart.

The town councillors, who were conducting the inspection, were preparing to look puzzled. But Alexander bowed slightly as if he had just succeeded in showing them a trick, and then smiled radiantly.

In Gordium the various divisions of the Macedonian army assembled: first Parmenion, newly arrived with his division from the winter camp in Sardes, and with him a large number of new recruits, three thousand on foot, six hundred and fifty on horseback.

While the numerous divisions were preparing to decamp, Alexander was holding momentous conferences in his tent. It became necessary to equip a new fleet for the purpose of maintaining close contact with the

motherland, for Mytilene had after all surrendered to Pharnabazus. Memnon's intrigues were still showing results.

"Athens will refuse to hand over vessels to us," the troubled Parmenion declaimed. Someone objected: "They are legally bound." The old man shook his head: "Notwithstanding."

It was Alexander who stopped the discussion. "I will give orders that all merchant ships coming from the Pontus shall be occupied and rigged out as war-ships."

He was in no wise inclined to handle the illustrious city with kid gloves. He looked around in a brutal and already victorious manner.

It was spring. Alexander was burning to provoke fresh military decisions which would be lasting. His troops waited with him, as eager as he.

He led them through Cappadocia, beyond the Halys, to Tarsus and Anchiale; on their route they occupied the province of Cilicia.

The tasks his impatience made him accomplish were often gigantic. Every morning he awoke with the same preoccupation: "We did not get far enough yesterday. To-day we must go farther, farther, much farther." The new recruits had first to accustom

themselves to these forced marches. The longest distances were covered by night, for during the day it was terribly hot, and when they did not sleep they preferred to be in the water.

They still shouted for joy when they splashed about in the ice-cold streams. The campaign had not yet lasted long enough for them, great adventures were still ahead, Babylon was awaiting them in all its voluptuous splendour.

When Alexander saw their brown bodies he could not remain alone and in his clothes; he discarded them, for he belonged to these youths as they splashed one another and shouted. He belonged to them, he was one of them, nothing more than their enthusiastic comrade. He was twenty years of age as they were, brown as they, muscular as they, and his hair grew like theirs. In the ecstasy of fellowship he forgot everything that separated him from them, his experiences, ambitions, and even his passions. His longing to be nothing more than a young man among young men, to share their ties which seemed to him more glorious and spontaneous than the tie between man and wife, was stronger than anything else.—So he jumped into the water with them.

This time he suffered for it, for he was very hot,

and the water ice-cold. He became very ill. His temperature rose to such an alarming point that his recovery was despaired of and a panic threatened to break out in the army. He had bathed with them, and now he was dying—

His doctor was a young Indian called Philip, whom the King loved very much. When he brought him his medicine, Alexander smiled gratefully and amiably, even on the day when he was in a coma. When the brown-skinned, gentle young man sat by his couch, he slept more easily and peacefully. Especially at such times were his dreams more pleasant. For Alexander feared his dreams.

“Asleep I often experience such disgusting things,” he told the young physician in one of his comas, as he visited him in the morning. “Last night I was standing by a river, in the burning sun. Out of the river stepped young men—how old could they have been? Not older than sixteen or seventeen, some were perhaps only fifteen—; I envied them, for they did not appear to feel the cold. They were slim and brown, on their chest, arms, back and calves there was goose-flesh, so long had they been in the water. Do you know that? When boys have been too long in the water, they get bluish lips, and they tremble. Their large

eyes also looked chilled and appealing. And they stood there thin and shuddering.

“But I had on a purple garment, I was buttoned to the neck in hot, close-fitting purple. That is why I was so hot. My head too, was solemnly wrapped up. A sweat trickled down the nape of my neck and my forehead, I swelled with the heat, and under my festive garment I grew fatter and fatter. A puffed up, dripping, purple creature, I stood facing the slender brown boys. Finally I must have split. It was ghastly.”

He stopped in disgust. The Indian had to sit by him a long while until he grew calmer.

Alexander smiled even on the morning when a letter had warned him against his learned physician: saying he had been bribed to murder him with a potent draught. The letter was from no less a person than Parmenion himself, who declared he was closely informed concerning the evil intentions of the doctor, and feared for the life of his King. Alexander handed the letter to the suspect to peruse, while he himself sipped the brew which had a pleasant taste of herbs. Philip wanted to defend himself with excited gestures, but the King in his wrappings and shawls laughed and declined with his hand.

“Since Parmenion is warning me against you,” he

said humorously, "I am sure you will make me well again."

He slept well, and was almost cured the following day.

They occupied Tarsus, and then Anchiale which was built by Sardanapalus. On the statue of the Assyrian king they found this inscription:

"Anchiale and Tarsus were founded by Sardanapalus in one day. But you, stranger, eat, drink, and love. What man has besides that is not worth mentioning."

This inscription appeared to occupy Alexander's thoughts considerably; he went about very pensively for the rest of the day.

The news of General Memnon's death threw the Great King into the most utter confusion; now he had no loophole left. He only sat and shook his head, great tears running down his large cheeks.

His mother, the vigorous Sisygambis, found him thus, and ridiculed him severely: "What a fine King!", said she as she pointed her finger at him. She reminded him sternly of the fact that he was an Achæmeneid. "The blood of Cyrus flows in your veins!", she

cried threateningly. He shook his weary head, sorrowful and incredulous. "Oh yes—" he said, full of anxiety.

Nevertheless he summoned a council of his leaders. He admitted to them that he was now at a loss as to the next step. The black-bearded, noisy gentlemen were obviously more decided: What was the next step to be? A gigantic battle had to be fought, bringing destruction on the enemy, and that at one blow as he deserved. The army was ready, and numbered hundreds of thousands; the Persian cavalry and Greek hirelings were waiting, and the King of Kings only had to go before them. His presence, cried the black-beards rattling their swords, would make them enthusiastic and courageous, there could never be a second Granicus.

The King, gentle, dignified and resigned, listened and nodded. That his person could enthuse an army and lead it to victory, was unrealizable and strange to him; but he enjoyed listening to their speech.

What Darius actually did dream the night before they set out to rejoin the army no one ever knew. He awoke in a distracted mood. The official information was that he had seen the Macedonian camp in flames,



a rather silly story which could only be taken seriously out of politeness.

Apparently in good spirits, but in reality depressed to the point of a nervous break-down, he started off, accompanied by the great Harem, the eunuchs, the mutes, the cooks and soothsayers, as well as the royal ladies.

He greeted the army with a tired voice. "We must be victorious, for right is on our side," he said sadly. Then he again stepped into the coach over which the canopy wobbled voluptuously. Next to him sat his mother, who scolded him for his unfortunate address; his wife and his two daughters, the elder of which was called Stateira.

The dull and motley crowd of human beings which called itself the army of the Great King, dragged its way slowly from the Euphrates towards Syria.

After the defeat Darius Codomannus fled unarmed in his tattered garment on a mare toward the east; he fled and fled and fled before Alexander past Onchac, Thapsacus and behind the Euphrates. He wailed and babbled; in his over-taxed head which was shaking as

he galloped along, his confused and painful thoughts hurt him.

“This ghastly Alexander has supernatural powers, I saw it in his eyes. If these eyes had not looked at me as they did, oh, then this battle would never have been lost; for then I had not fled.

“Because these eyes looked at me, my kingdom will perish,” he thought confusedly. “My turning was the beginning of the catastrophe. The centre got disorganized—”

Advancing evening, a windy night, and a grey morning heard his despairing prattle. Some people had pity on him and gave him a pot of water and some bread. No one recognized him. On his mare he was just a babbling, deranged old man with a large head who was hastening toward the east at a delirious speed.

Meanwhile Alexander was inspecting the royal treasures, the tents and provisions as well as the Harem, everything that had been left behind in Damascus. The Queen-Mother as well as the Queen were also his prisoners.

The suspicious old dame anticipated the worst for herself; in frigid silence she awaited the Macedonian officers,—ten of them at least, she thought,—who

would assault her. Instead of which no one bothered very much about the great ladies. Alexander had barely troubled to give instructions that they were to be allowed every comfort and were to be treated with marked courtesy. He himself did not even pay them a visit.

He and his friends had some fun with the treasures which they had found in the royal tents. They tried on the magnificent garments decorated with precious stones, sniffed at the ointments, and used the golden dishes at table.

Alexander showed himself to his comrades in the festive garment of the Great King; they cheered, clapped their hands and laughed. For a lark he bid them fall at his feet. When they touched the ground before him with their foreheads, he suddenly grew serious.

Darius was overtaken by his cavalry and generals, and almost made a prisoner. They brought him to his senses, and more rudely than respectfully they reminded him of his position and of what he owed to himself and to the nation. Under their influence he composed a note which began with the words:

“The Kings of Kings, Achaemeneid, son of Ahura-Mazda, the sun-god, Darius Codomannus—to Alexander, the Macedonian.”

In the course of the note he set forth in agonized language what the invader had done to him; how he, without any provocation, had destroyed the quiet, peace and prosperity of his great and beautiful kingdom. But since the gods in their inscrutable and often incomprehensible wisdom had decided the great battle for him, Alexander, he was prepared, as king to king, to negotiate with him as with an equal. First he would request that his ladies be returned to him, for he was very devoted to them, and then they would meet to consider the terms on which the Macedonian army would evacuate the territory to which it had no claim.

To this peacefully innocent offer the poor Great King received a reply which was headed: “King Alexander of Macedonia, son of Philip, the Heracleid—to Darius,” and which began grandiloquently:

“Since I am lord over Asia . . .”

In a few terse phrases it said there could be no question of a parley “as equal to equal.” If Darius was anxious to approach Alexander, he could only do so if he recognized him as his unconditional master. If

he would not do this, the battle would have to be fought all over again.—Concerning his Ladies, he would have to come in person to fetch them, and would at the same time have to bow the knee before his master.—

Darius, who read this reply, sat motionless for a long time, only shaking his head.

#### IV

When he was discussing important matters or even when he was alone, Alexander had acquired the habit of pacing the room with his hands on his back and his head lowered; and only when a conclusion was to be pronounced would he stand still and formulating his short sentences with bent brows.

Pacing up and down in his tent he pondered and made decisions.

“If I were to act according to the wishes of my officers and my army, I would take immediate advantage of the great victory by starting for Babylon.

“But I must not do it. I need the Phœnician trade centres. Above all, I need Egypt.

"I need Egypt," he said aloud, stopping in the centre of the room. "*It belongs to my Empire.*"

The picture he made to himself was so overwhelming that he had to close his eyes. He saw "the Empire," its eastern frontier fading into the unknown; was Greece together with Macedonia more than an appendage to his glory? But his heart was in Egypt; he saw his soldiers marching through a desert, in the centre of which they found the sanctuary. It contained the blessing, the confirmation.

"There is the confirmation."

Alexander summoned his generals to an audience. He briefly explained to them what was to be done; they listened with amazement.

The most important commercial centres had already surrendered: Sidon, Aradus, Byblus. They were accustomed to changing their master, and had been successively under Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian rule. They had always been given facilities for continuing their business, and living sumptuously clothed in fine purple.

Tyre alone was intractable, for as an island city it considered itself impregnable.

The siege lasted for several months.

After the conquest of Tyre and the fortress of Gaza Alexander, accompanied only by a few troops, visited Juda and Samaria where a strange thing happened to him. For there he was greeted by a priest, Jaddua by name, who seemed more pompous than any other conjurer or exorcist who had frequented Olympias' quarters. He raised his flat hands, and swung his head from side to side, nasally reciting a litany.

The gist of what he said was that Alexander was he whose coming the Holy Scriptures had prophesied and predicted; he who was sent by Jehovah to free the chosen people from the Persian yoke.—Alexander, who was listening with polite earnestness, liked this speech exceptionally well. Accustomed to guessing the divinity whose nature was a secret, in every form or mask, he willingly believed in this one which remained invisible, but seemed to be terribly strict and jealous.

Under the priest's definite instructions he offered sacrifice to the mysterious god in his temple; it was in a town called Jerusalem.

A year had passed since the battle of Issus. At last they were ready to set out for Egypt.

It was evident that no battle was needed. The country surrendered to anyone who would set it free from



the tyranny of Persia. There it lay in majestic stiffness, its daily meditations nothing more than the time-old devout, established thoughts. Thus it awaited the hero who was to come to it with uplifted sword.

At his approach the governor, Mazacus, went to meet him, dressed in his finest attire and with numerous attendants. To the young stranger with the shining eyes he handed over Memphis without any sort of difficulty.

When Alexander offered sacrifices to the Aphis animal in the temple of Ptah, the people wept and rejoiced that their saviour had come: their former master, Artaxerxes Ochus, had pierced the sacred animal with his sword, instead of offering it sacrifice.

"He has come back!" they cried in the streets. "Our saviour has come back!"

He stepped onto the terrace where everybody could see him. "I have come back!" he cried with uplifted arms.

Jaddua, the priest of the unseen god, had recognized him, and now the people of his sacred city also knew who he was.

"I have come back!" he cried over the heads of the people; thus he announced the joyous message of his presence.

His presence and his entry to Memphis were to be celebrated in such a way that they would never be forgotten; games were organized, Greek artists and champions were already on their way to the town. "There will be a Greco-Egyptian contest!" was announced by his order. "A gigantic tournament for the inauguration of the Empire which I am establishing."

The people replied: "He has come back!"

As a matter of fact Alexander only stayed in the royal and holy city for a few days. A remoter and more mysterious spot was drawing him.

Olympias had often casually hinted at their relations to the occult god Amen-Rah whom the Greeks called Ammon-Zeus, but Alexander had never forgotten it. "Greet the divinity Ammon from me!" was one of her parting words to Alexander; and,—as he remembered with affection and a slight tremor,—that secretly mocking smile and absorbing glance of hers had not been wanting.—"*He knows everything,*" she had added.

To himself and to others Alexander justified this excursion, which lured him irresistibly and mysteri-

ously, with the plea that it was made for political purposes.

“Our Empire,” he said to the generals as they departed, “which extends beyond its Greek borders, needs a protector from outside its own frontiers. That is why I am seeking the Greco-Egyptian divinity.”

For the Greeks too, had from all time worshipped Ammon, who dwelt in the oasis. According to trustworthy reports, Perseus as well as Heracles had been guests in his sanctuary, and the Oracle of Delphi had more than once issued a warning that Ammon was to be obeyed before all other gods; he was to be consulted and his will carried out.

“This expedition is very much to our interest,” Alexander wrote to his mother before setting out.

The journey through the Libyan desert was long and fatiguing; loose sand flew into their parched faces, and there was no spot of grass on which to rest, no well from which to drink, and no palm-tree under which to have a good night’s rest.

The wise Egyptian boys, who led them through the desert, entertained the King with all kinds of godly tales and anecdotes, some of which he had already heard from Olympias. Once again he listened to the tale of how Osiris had been duped by his deformed

brother; they recited the whole of the long sorrowful chant of Isis to him; finally they gave Alexander a most vivid description of her bliss at receiving him again.

They also knew amusing stories; for instance, how Isis, who was an adroit talker, duped the sun-god Rah, who was growing old. They told of all sorts of sacred animals, of their influence and their power; and then, full of awe and reverence, of the kingdom of the dead and its wondrous, but stern habits and customs; also of the remedies, charms and spells which acted as a protection against various complaints.

Alexander enquired, examined and asked questions; his curiosity was insatiable. What was this sky over their heads? It might be an enormous and venerable cow on which the gods had taken up their abode, or again it might be a giantess which daily gave birth to sun, moon and stars amid the greatest bliss and travail.

Everything was interlinked, and mysteriously woven into something else; the great gods themselves could not be distinguished one from another.

When evening came, the learned Egyptian boys would talk sorrowfully of the days when the Pharaohs still ruled over the Nile country in God-given glory,

and adored the Higher Being in the Holiest of Holies. How long ago were those days, said they sadly and wisely, and how many cruel foreign rulers had since passed through the Kingdom of Osiris. Now it was too late, no one even rebelled any more. "Our country has grown old," said the youths sorrowfully.

In order to divert them from their troubles, Alexander repeatedly enquired about Amen-Rah, for whose sanctuary they were bound; and they told him how Amen-Rah a long, long time ago, had come to Thebes of the Hundred Gates in a consecrated boat from the land of the Ethiopians; how in Thebes his power and splendour had increased greatly, particularly since in the course of time he had entered into a kind of nuptial union with Rah; how he had marched from Thebes to the burning desert, to rest in the oasis, and how he would reveal himself in mysterious form to the stranger seeking his sanctuary, provided he was worthy.

Did the boy-guides, although they were so clever and melancholy, know anything about the real nature of this many-named god? It was an impenetrable mystery. They thought he was also related to the generative god Min of Coptus; but it appeared that they made him a relation of everything and everybody, especially of Osiris. His wife was Mut who knew more

about magic and goodness than anyone, and lived in a pond the shape of the moon's crescent; their son was no other than the moon-god-himself.

So many godly, although not always comprehensible conversations and enquiries made them lose their bearings. As there was no road, only burning, hateful sand blowing in their faces, they had almost lost their way. But the Mysterious One himself sent them large, white birds, which fluttered before them with shrill cries and showed them their path. So they were no longer afraid of walking in a circle. Cool water also came down from the sky, which yet remained blue and cloudless; they received it with gratefully open mouths, for they were near to dying of thirst.

On the same day they reached the oasis, where olive-trees and date-palms bore fruit side by side. There lay the sanctuary wrapt in a great peace, and near by were springs full of healing salts.

The tile-wall surrounding the block of buildings was reached by the sacred road, broad and flooded with sun, which was bordered by animal and sphinx figures. Alexander refused to be accompanied; his head devoutly lowered, he went down the street all by himself, and stood alone before the gate which was flanked by two broad towers.

It was opened by a muffled servant who made a low bow. In the vestibule the high priest Psammon, famous as a seer and initiate in everything, awaited his arrival.

The young King bent over the frail hand to kiss it. Above him the age-old, experienced voice said through a white beard:

“The god welcomes you, my son.”

The back hall, which was intended for more intimate festivities, was decorated with coloured signs and symbols, and had symbolic figures in it; Alexander did not understand the meaning of any of them.

Psammon who placed fruit and drinks before him, said with that thoughtful look which old relatives have when they discover family likenesses: “You have your mother’s eyes, my son.”

Alexander, honestly alarmed, enquired: “Then you knew my mother?” At this the old man nodded.

Alexander was surprised and said nothing. Then he asked whether he might question him; the old man had no objections. In the first place, the King, somewhat hypocritically interested, wanted to know



whether "all the assassins of his father had been punished."

At this the high priest raised his finger reprovingly. A thousand little wrinkles started to work in his white face; who would have thought that he could look so affectionately playful. "There, my son," and he had an air of coquettish dignity, "you know perfectly well that no mortal could hurt *your father*.—Philip's assassin, however, has been punished," he added more coldly.

At this unmistakable hint, Alexander blushed for joy, then laughed radiantly, though with a little embarrassment.

His next question was more open and bold; it was this: "*Shall I know everything?*" and his eyes glowed. "Oh, you are inquisitive," the famous seer said in a fatherly joking tone. Alexander stretched himself voluptuously. "*Terribly so,*" was all he said.

The old man, whose drooping mouth was still smiling, enquired with a deep and searching thoughtfulness in his eye: "*Why* do you want to know, my child?" And Alexander, enthusiastically, with arms outstretched and a ring in his voice: "To bring deliverance, my father." The initiate said in a low voice, as if to himself:

“You lie.”

Alexander seemed not to hear it, and his greedy, shining eyes were still waiting to be satisfied. Psammon hesitated, then, once more teasingly, he said: “Aristotle taught you many things.” Thereupon the youth impatiently shrugged his shoulders: “He did not know anything himself,”—like a naughty school-boy.

The agèd man gazed into a distance in which everything seemed veiled. After a long and thoughtful pause he finally said with a fleeting smile—for he already knew what was coming: “Let us leave that till later. Go on questioning me, my child.”

Now Alexander did not question, he demanded, and in a loud voice so that the temple resounded: “Give me dominion over the world, oh father! Give me dominion over the world!”

His words re-echoed as if he had spoken them into an abyss; the echo rang and roared. At the same time it seemed to grow darker about them.

Still stretching himself and trembling, he felt the high priest’s eye upon him becoming wistful. But when Psammon replied, he was no longer close to Alexander, but far back by the decorated wall, where the bronze folding-doors in front of the temple were

closed. It was no longer the old man with the jolly little wrinkles whose metallic voice now filled the vaulted room with unearthly music. Alexander, already at the end of his strength, heard these words:—

“To you, son of man, offspring of my loins, I bequeathe the royal dignity of Rah and Horus. To you I give courage and power over lands and creeds, knowledge of every secret, and might to your arm that it may conquer all nations. I promise you,” cried the voice which was not that of Psammon, for it was devoid of all sympathy, “all the suffering and all the glory of this world—”

Was it the bronze portals that burst open, or had the wall opened of itself? But the splendour was blinding. A radiant light broke upon the prostrate man, depriving him of his senses. It scorched his forehead and eyes. It elated and tortured him until he fell exhausted.

Thus was Alexander's life dedicated to glory and suffering.

Alexander departed from Egypt after founding a city which he called Alexandria, near to the sea, seven

leagues distant from the Island of Seals, as Homer calls it.

## V

He returned a different man from this excursion to Libya. The older men, especially Parmenion, complained that he was unapproachable and proud as never before; and the way he talked about his father, the great Philip, was quite unpardonable. The younger men said that a glory went out of him in these days as it had not done even in Troy. "The god has blessed him with all his favour," they told one another in tone of awe. "So he is truly his son."

Before the battle of Gaugamela on the river Buzmodus he slept better and more soundly than at any time since his childhood. When they woke him, he looked as rested, gentle and eager as a boy who is ready for the greatest adventure, for he knows an angel is protecting him. He sent this message to his mother: "I am going to fight a great battle!"

As nimbly as ever he stepped in front of his troops; his exhortation to them was inspiring. "This battle," he announced, raising his arm with its clashing mail,

“is the last in our wrestling and fighting for Asia. We are no longer concerned with the conquest of Syria or Egypt, but with obtaining dominion over the Orient!”

He was so beautiful that they whispered to one another: this man was not born of mortals, and the rumour that their King was the belted mysterious Zeus-Helios’ son, must be true.

Over his belted shirt made by Sicilians he wore a linen doublet of mail, which he had captured near Issus. His helm of iron shone like the purest silver, and his iron collar was studded with precious stones. The short sword, hard, light, dangerous, was a present from the King of Cyprus.—Everything he wore sparkled. The troops expressed their gratitude for his beauty by cheering—ready to die for him.

On the opposite side Darius had strained every nerve for a final effort; it was public knowledge that more than a million men, forty thousand horses and many hundred war-chariots which looked terrifying with their flashing scythes, had been summoned from the remotest provinces of his kingdom. Bactrian and Sogdianx troops, men from Turkestan, Medea, Gedrosia and Persia had arrived with their overlords.

The troops which faced Alexander’s were no

longer an army of hired mercenaries, they were a national army: their leader however, appeared exhausted before the battle began. While the Macedonian King was receiving the cheers of his comrades, Darius, accompanied by his princes, rode along the endless line of his troops. They did not dare to cheer, his magnificent garment blinded them. Silently and resigned to their fate, they occupied the entire plain as far as the horizon, as if they had been destined for nothing else. The Great King spoke to them with words that were intended to encourage them, but only very few of them knew his language, they hardly understood him. Their unknown faces were there before him, resigned to their fate and dumb like a lot of cattle—ready for slaughter; long rows of yellow faces; long rows of blackish, coffee-brown ones. Faces of cattle ready for slaughter with strong cheek-bones, slit eyes, shaggy little beards; others with purple lips and sad, gold-shimmering eyes.

Darius had no courage for further speech; he turned round to his generals for assistance. Bessus, Governor of Bactria, a wicked little fellow with piercing eyes, stepped in and spoke for him: he thundered smart phrases across the sea of unmoved faces.

Darius watched him sadly; whenever his officer hurled a particularly self-confident phrase at them, he nodded his heavy head sadly in confirmation.

The Macedonians attacked furiously, their condition was one of frenzy and ecstasy. Never had they loved their Alexander so rapturously. They had no wish on earth now but to die at his side.

With the triumphant alala!, and their spears thrust forward, they overran the Persian centre, then the left wing; on the right wing Parmenion, who was in a lame and apathetic state, nearly spoiled everything. At the decisive moment, when Alexander with his *élite* was himself on the run after the aimlessly fleeing Great King, the breathless envoys of the sleepy old general arrived, saying that Parmenion needed help, otherwise everything would be lost. Alexander replied gruffly and irritatedly, asking whether the old man were crazy to imagine the centre could spare any forces in the thick of the battle?

Nevertheless he sent them; in the meantime the Great King had fled.

After the unparalleled victory of Gaugamela, the city of Babylon, key-stone of the Orient, ruler of the



Aramaic lowland, and winter-residence of the Great King, was handed over by Governor Mazaius to the Macedonian King without bloodshed. The oldest citizens as well as the richest, awaited him with garlands of flowers outside the town walls; with them, on their gay little donkeys, were the Chaldaeans of Borsippa, who could see into the future.

They went through the gate of Ichtar and the procession route which was decorated with pictures of animals, and to the palace, whose black statues solemnly welcomed them. Around them were nothing but flowers and the irresponsible cheers of the crowd as they welcomed their new master. The women stood on tiptoe and waved amorously; they saw that many of these soldiers were very beautiful and nearly all of them young, and the youth at their head was particularly handsome; his eyes were large and radiant, and he never laughed when flowers fell on his face, but only looked around in a wonderful way.—Beside him, the darker, gentler youth with the friendly glance appeared equally desirable to many; he must be the favourite of the King, for he kept close to him.

The Babylonian men with their prettily curled beards waved their high, coloured felt hats with loud

heartfelt mirth, and also their long, smooth walking-sticks, the tops of which were decorated with buds of lilies and finely carved birds' heads. They were as delighted as children, because they were in for a new adventure and a new master; and, as he was young, he could not be very bad.

Two hundred years ago Cyrus had conquered their town; and before that had she not obeyed innumerable other princes?

During the first days after his arrival Alexander spent all his time wandering about in the castle and the adjoining gardens, whose broad flowered terraces sloped down to the Euphrates. He sat in the palace as under a spell; all the streets of the district met there, it was the magnetic centre of a gigantic and complicated system of postal stations, express messengers, and hurrying coaches. He dictated his orders and received embassies. One of his gestures, which aroused the delight of the population, but also caused some surprise and even alarm in his immediate *entourage*, was that he allowed the governor Mazaius to keep his post: "I have not come to offend or destroy," he explained. He then added imperiously—striding ceaselessly to and fro with lowered head, "I am come to set free and make glad."

He called for the greatest architects of the town and ordered them to rebuild the shrines of Babylonian divinities, the temples of Anu, Enlil and Ea, of Shamas, Ichtar and Sin, which Xerxes had destroyed; also the seven-tier building of the temple of Bel-Marduc which was the holiest of them all, because the town-god dwelt there.

He wanted to become popular, there was nothing more important to him.

While they were already shouting and praising his name in all the streets and squares, he still did not dare to leave the palace. He was prevented, he did not know why, by a nervousness which often developed into a panic.

Meanwhile his soldiers, split up into small groups, swarmed through the labyrinth of streets which seemed at once primitive—for they ran in a straight line—and complicated. There were constantly changing effects of scenery, some aspects appearing greyed or ochre-brown, while in the evening they appeared to be a violet semi-darkness.

The first few days the men from the hills of Macedonia and from the small Greek towns stood with their mouths wide open gazing at the sights, the dice-shaped monumental structures of granite, porphyry

and basalt, from the reflecting depths of which one's face appeared mysteriously obscured; at the Assyrian stone images, the winged steers with human heads, whose rigid, evil, impenetrable and eternal smile frightened and confused them more than did the crooked sabres and shark-knived chariots at Gaugamela, at Issus and on the Granicus.

Some objects already wore a rather decadent look, for instance the immense wall to which they had made a solemn pilgrimage; even the temple of Marduc-Bel. "Well," they said humbly, "it will be a good thing when our King brings a little life into this sleepy place."—The Hanging Gardens of Semiramis, of which they had heard at home, were much appreciated by them.

At last they had had enough of the sights; and then they noticed that the city was full of a sweetly stale odour, which penetrated every nook and alley. It streamed from the temples and stores, from the shawls of the women and the well-trimmed beards of the men; in many alleys and back-yards it was stronger and had an evil, yet fascinating stench.—The soldiers began to dig each other in the ribs and to laugh awkwardly, for they suddenly saw women standing against every gateway and wall.

There was no question about it, no women in Athens, no women in Pella had been as magnificently attired as these. They wore broad sparkling chains round their necks which tinkled softly and invitingly; coloured jewels on their ankles, wrists, and plump forearms. Their calm, broad, much made-up faces showed beautifully painted eyes, quiet and alluring, and a large, darkly-painted mouth, from which a pleasant odour emanated.

The soldiers who had followed these heavy-limbed ladies into the remotest little dwellings, returned exhausted, but enraptured. They had never and nowhere experienced such extraordinary and phantastic ecstasies; their intimations alone made their comrades crazy.

Another point about these affairs was that the most attractive girls were at the same time the most devout, they called themselves the handmaids of Tchtar, of Mylitta; and in the most complicated games, thought out with the greatest cunning, and in positions of voluptuousness they remained serious, even solemn, as they were in the temple. "They do not close their eyes," said the youths who came out of their embraces. "They gaze at one the whole time,

with so sleepy and saintly a look, that one is quite stupefied.”

When Alexander rode out for the first time, the entire town was on holiday. The men wore their most festive garments, which were narrow, fringed with snow-white or rainbow-colours; then they had coloured hats, under which their blue-black hair appeared carefully arranged down to the nape. The women had adorned themselves with their most sparkling jewels, they swayed to and fro with a most promising air, their ears adorned with thick rings, and enormous chains around their necks.—It was hardly possible to discern where the river was, so thick were the gay barges on its waters. Little boats swung in and out of them, some were nothing more than hollowed-out tree-trunks, lined with skins.

Alexander on his decorated steed with a half-suspicious, half-interested air sniffed the tempting and yet insipid smell which emanated from the open doors, the gutters and the women's bodies. He followed it, almost seduced already, into the narrowest lanes, where it became penetrating and almost took away his breath.

“It is a mixture of Arabic spices and decomposi-

tion," he who rode beside him declared with the air of an expert. It was no other than Arrhidaeus, his very absent-minded half-brother, who had arrived with messages from Olympias and Antipater in Pella, for the purpose of offering congratulations to Alexander on his great success.

It struck him as a little uncanny that Arrhidaeus should be acquainted with this musty-smelling maze of alleys, as if he were at home in it. "Here it smells most of all!" he announced indecently, and tempted the riders into more and more remote corners, which lay shrouded in grimy vapours.

The articles which were sold here looked mouldy and were already in decomposition, especially the sweet meats; even the lustre of the silken materials and dazzling fabrics which were spread out before them, had something suspicious about them.

Alexander found the appearance of the children the most disturbing of all. Girls of eight or ten years of age should not look as these did; their eyes were already lustful and devout, and as veiled as those of their obliging mothers; their broad, made-up mouths and their indolent, provocative demeanour also resembling their mothers'. Unfortunately many of the little boys were also made up, and Alexander made a



hasty resolution to forbid it.—Meanwhile Arrhidaeus at his side was watching the children with a dreamy and tender look, saying: “The dear little brats!”; he spat like an old man, and smiled.

Finally the two brothers lost sight of their escort and nearly missed their way. A modest and pretty little girl, with whom Arrhidaeus seemed to be very intimate, at last showed them the way home.

After this, Alexander went out daily on horseback; rarely did he have a large escort, often he rode accompanied only by the dreamy Arrhidaeus, or again, as the tale went, disguised and alone, so that he might get to know everything thoroughly.

He felt the materials and tools in the storekeepers’ vaults, tasted heavily spiced and also sweet dishes in the eating-houses, sniffed at the little bottles of sweet-smelling oils which were to be found at the ointment-dealers and hairdressers.

He visited the handmaids of Ichtar, and made them show him their tricks and artifices; but also the men who occupied themselves with course of the stars, sitting before mysterious boards and mathematical tables: they told him many things about his future.

Most often however, he visited certain very ancient scribes who lived in huts outside the town and could give information about many things, if not about everything.

Their dwelling, which was narrow, of a clay-yellow and falling to pieces, was enhanced with the splendour of the young King's armour and the majestic grandeur of the coat he wore on his shoulders. They were not humble with him, but rather severe. For they had knowledge, while he was young and had only actions to show.

Time after time they had to tell him the chronicles and history of Babylon, expound them, and enlarge upon them; the account of its rise and fall, its sorrowful years, the periods of its triumph, but above all the history of its gods.

He listened reverently, as he would listen to Homer as a child, learning how the long extinct people of the Sumerians who had come from the farthest East, discovered hieroglyphics and established civilization in the country; how the Accadians after them had founded their kingdom at the time when in Uruc they worshipped the god of the sky, in Ur the moon, in Nippur Enlil, the god of the nations, in Eridu the water-god Ea, and in Adab the great mother of the

gods herself, who was known by many names. Degradation followed on splendour, and then again there was a renaissance, for new chiefs, no one knew whence they came, finally founded the kingdom whose capital was Babili. It was this great chronicle of the rise and fall, of foreign yokes and liberations, which the old men in their clay-yellow hut recited to Alexander. They also told of Hammurapi, who made the wisest laws, down to Cyrus, the Achaemeneid.

“And now you have come,” they concluded their account with serious politeness.

It seemed impossible to satisfy the enormous thirst for knowledge evinced by this young King. When he had sat with them all through the night, he still wanted to hear more next morning.

They had to sing and recite to him the entire song of creation; then the heroic battle of Marduc against Tiâmat, the First Mother who had become dangerous, and Cingu, her horridly luminous husband: lastly, the creation of man out of the blood of Cingu sacrificed. In this connection Alexander was reminded of similar stories which Olympias had secretly told him. “A god shall be killed,” his mother had said.

Then there was the story of Adaps, who did not

take the water of life because he was so scrupulously careful; and the most horrible, unforgettable story of Ichtar, who drove down into the underworld, where the mighty Queen Eresykigal tortured her with sixty diseases and kept her a prisoner till Tammuz himself set her free.

Alexander was so curious that he wanted to trace the history of the gods right back to the time when Marduc was still Tammuz, the true son of the abyss; for he knew that the mystery of Tammuz' death and resurrection must be similar to that of Adonis; and further back, to the mysterious time when Tammuz and Osiris were still one and the same person, as were Isis and Ichtar.

But the wise men did not like to let him go so far back. "The character of the gods is shrouded in mystery," they concluded firmly.

The young Macedonian generals could be seen standing about in groups with a vexed air. They were complaining of their King, who was not acting according to their taste.

Philotas, the stately and presumptuous son of Parmenion, enquired spitefully: "Don't you see? His

eyes already look as if he were inebriated. He gives himself up to these Arabian fairy tales and devilish stories as to a vice. While he is fading away in an Eastern fashion, my father has to work for him, occupy Susa and fight the robber-folk of the Uxians."

They all nodded indignantly, Craterus, Perdiccas, Coinus, Nearchus. They were all offended, because Alexander surrounded himself more and more with Egyptian and Persian nobles, neglecting his own companions quite pointedly. Their offended vanity caused them to take the part of morally indignant persons. "The East bewitches and unmans him," they said with severity.

After a sojourn of a few weeks the longed-for marching orders were given. The great departure from Babylon was, however, postponed by another few days, due to an awkward and rather ridiculous incident: Arrhidaeus had disappeared. What had happened was that the poor creature who had always been under a cloud and had spent his youth babbling in a cellar, had suddenly conceived the idea of venturing out alone for a walk, probably into the alleys whose smell he loved.

He did not return, and no amount of searching availed anything. Had he hidden himself, or had he

been murdered? The maze of little alleys had swallowed him up; they had to give him up as lost and hush up the whole affair as best they could, departing without him.

They marched up from the lowland to the high Iran, where the old royal towns of Persepolis and Pasargadai were to be conquered.

Up there the air was purer than in Babylon, where mingled the smells and the corruption of so many civilizations. They were now in the true cradle of the Persian kingdom; the palace with its forty columns, which led upwards, had belonged to Xerxes who had attacked the Acropolis of Athens. In front of the portal reposed colossal statues in the Assyrian style: evil-looking hybrids born of man, horse and steer.

Alexander passed by the threatening statues and entered with a feeling of triumph mingled with awe.

Inside, the throne awaited him; it had once been the throne of Xerxes. Statues of animals lay on one side, and the rich dais was covered with symbols. Alexander seated on the throne, received the deputies from the town.

Finally he also received his own friends; they wanted to smile as they saw him seated in the midst of all this foreign splendour, but he remained unap-

proachable. This made them somewhat contemptuous, they bowed low before him, but there was irony in their bow. Hephaestion alone kissed his hand with a chivalrous earnestness. "You are the King of Asia," he said, as if to confirm it, and with a secret undertone of pity.

Alexander, standing above him, and in a strangely inhuman voice which soared metallically through the large hall, repeated after him:

*"I am the King of Asia."*

He was particularly majestic and stern with old Parmenion, who had asked for an audience on an important matter. The General approached deferentially, but self-consciously. He had served King Philip faithfully for many decades, he pointed out with a sad and rather blood-shot look from below; his emaciated, wrinkled cheeks as well as his side-whiskers trembled. He surely had a right to warn the young King, opined the old man.

The look with which Alexander scrutinized him, from under his arched eyebrows, was more threatening than questioning: "Often I did *not* heed your warnings; and never to my hurt," he said cuttingly. But the General did not allow this to upset him, rather did it make him passionate. "We have reached our



goal!" he cried adjuringly; then added: "Further than this Philip would never have gone." "Not even as far as this," said he who sat morosely on the throne.

To continue the advance further, explained the General with pedagogic severity, would be committing a crime against the nation. Now the only thing to be done was to reorganize the conquered lands. "Our goal is reached!" cried the greybeard pleadingly. "The ignominy Greece suffered in days gone by has been plenteously avenged. If we now go further, we shall lose our contact with home. We must make Greek colonies of the new districts!"

The superhuman voice from the throne replied: "I don't want colonies. I want the whole world for my dominion."

Parmenion warned him: "Then the whole world will swallow up Greece. It is growing above your heads. Stop, Alexander!" He raised his arms as if to protect himself against the flood which seemed literally to threaten him.

Then Alexander, with a coldness which made the blood curdle in the old man's veins:

*"What have I to do with Greece?"*

"In that case"—Parmenion was so horrified that

he had not even the strength to show his indignation; he bowed his head, quite overcome.

He stared at the ground, was he crying? He was bitterly offended. Meanwhile, where did the eye of his young King wander?

“Let us go to the East,” he said calmly and quietly; while the old man was crying, the eye of the young one was slipping into the infinite.

That night a conflagration broke out in the King's palace at Persepolis, which reduced large sections of the castle and the surrounding buildings to ashes. No one knew how it had started. There was a rumour that the King himself had arranged it, but no one dared say so. What purpose would it have served? It would have been the deed of a madman. His triumph was great enough, he did not need to emphasize it in this way, which would make enemies, destroy treasures, and give him no advantage.

It struck everyone as odd that Alexander, during the progress of the fire, had been seen wandering about the courts of the palace, gazing into the flames with an uncanny, hungry look in his eye. Whenever a column collapsed, he would listen to the crash with

his eyes closed, as if to some music that was becalming him.

Thus it was that Clitus found him. They faced one another alone, how long was it since they had done this? Was it not by the Granicus?

The reflection of the flames danced over Clitus' face, over his forehead and down his cheeks, causing sparks to come from his eyes, and playing about his mouth. . . . His face looked peaceful, the light flattering him; but the King's face was in the dark.

"And it was I who started this fire," so mused Alexander with pained defiance.

# *Probation*

## I

**D**arius fled. It seemed to him that the danger was growing less, the farther east he went. Thus he left Ecatana, sent caravans, harems, and the remaining jewels ahead of him to Ragai, at the entrance of the Caspian passes. He followed, and with him the last of the aristocracy who had remained faithful to him, the last of the Chiliarchy, led by Narbazanas.—Behind him went Alexander, who was in his eyes no longer a man, but only some fatalistic being.

His wife had died in child-birth, but the sturdy and relentless Sisygambis was still alive, also his dark-haired daughters. For them he had to live, for them in particular; then for the kingdom,—the capitals of which fate in the shape of a catastrophic youth had for the time being taken from him,—but a kingdom which awaited liberation by him, Darius Codomannus, the Achaemeneid and hereditary ruler.

His weak and tired soul took refuge in devotions. In lengthy meditations he would consult the divinity for the purpose of discovering why it had ordered everything in so inexplicable a way. Doubtless it was a question of an old struggle between good and evil,

which Zarathustra had taught Spitama. This rebel from Macedonia was the most illustrious ambassador of absolute power: never had the divinity revealed itself in so disastrous and overwhelming a manner. Who was called to stand against it, if not the grandson of the great Cyrus, in whose possession was the imperial crown? "One day the struggle will cease—and the evil, it will fade away," announced Zarathustra.

There were of course the terrible hours of temptation, when the prophet himself was in doubt: "Is there any morality in the world?—or is there perhaps only room for cleverness?" But after his scruples there came confidence, he had never been so confident, not even in Babylon seated upon his ornate throne. For the prophet had left with him the strengthening words:

"What is victory, what defeat! The die is already cast. Only he who is in you—he lives!"

His die was cast; but for his opponent was this warning intended: "But woe betide you, if you are unfaithful!"

His *entourage*, which had known him to be modest and idyllic, often even despondent, was surprised, in that hour of extreme and inevitable danger, to find

him alert. It was only now that they understood how, despite his very large head and his dreamy eyes, he was a nobleman, almost a hero.

He summoned the great ones of his kingdom, and informed them that once again he would wage war against Alexander. "The gods are on my side," he said with feeling and pride.—It was humiliating for him to hear them oppose him. At first they hesitated, then they openly admitted: that to stake their lives in a cause which appeared hopeless to them at the moment, seemed senseless. They ought to go further eastward, to Bactria and to Sogdia, there to seek reinforcements.

The Great King was more disappointed than angry. He said nothing; meditating: did God then not want a decision? He grew angry only when Narbazanas came to him with his impertinent proposal.

This callous old courtier acted as if there were nothing extraordinary in what he so calmly suggested. Might it not be furthering the great cause, he volunteered cautiously, if Darius retired, renouncing his claim to the throne in favour of the governor, Bessus? Narbazanas explained with sticky courtesy how the latter, while the Great King grew pale, was enjoying great prestige in all the countries of the

East; the Scythians and the Indians were allied with him; moreover, he was said to be related to the royal house.

He did not get any further, for Darius was feeling for his dagger. With a crooked smile Narbazanas withdrew; he was followed by Bessus, a muscular little fellow of the Mongol type, with a black hanging moustache upon his yellow, bony face.

The mood in which the journey was continued, was heavy and at the same time agitated. Bessus with his party kept wisely and quietly apart. The courage and energy of the Great King were quite spent after so short a triumph, and he rested in his coach with an indifferent mien.

When in the village of Thara three masqueraders—they were Bessus, Narbazanus and Baisaentes,—entered his tent, he was barely surprised. He hardly offered any resistance when he was put in chains.

The same night Bessus had himself proclaimed Commander-in-Chief of the Army, a deputy of the King. Darius Codomannus, who was content sadly to shake his head, continued his route under escort.

Alexander immediately received news of these occurrences, and decided he must also get the dethroned and captured Codomannus. He therefore set out on a



forced march behind the traitor caravan. The chase lasted four days and four nights, horses were ridden to death, and soldiers fell exhausted by the wayside. Finally Alexander was left alone with a handful of his officers.

They at last found the royal coach out in the wilds, deserted by the troops and escorts, the very horses unharnessed. Lying back on the cushions was Darius Codomannus, his heavy head sunk forward, exhausted. Blood trickled from several spots on the fanciful and complicated embroidery of his coat-front. He could not have been long dead, for his hand, which Alexander touched gently, was not yet cold.

Alexander also touched his forehead, his nose and his slightly turgid mouth. In order to recognize it more clearly in the semi-dark coach, he groped about on the large, dead face, which he had never known in life; he examined it thoroughly, with a sinister curiosity.

"So this was my enemy," he said at last, sorrowfully as well as contemptuously. He beckoned to one of the officers to have the sheet laid over the corpse. "Who is the new one?" he suddenly asked absent-mindedly, as if it were of no importance. "Bessus—

Bessus—" He repeated the name, as if trying the taste on his tongue.—Then he turned away and hurriedly left the coach.

The assassins of the King had got away; Bessus by way of Bactria, and Narbazanus to Hyrcanius.

Darius Codomannus' body was taken to Persepolis by order of Alexander. The Queen-Mother was present at the burial of the last of the Achaemeneids.

Now it was important to conquer the province of Hyrcanius, on account of its many coastal harbours. The capital surrendered. But they could not rest long in that place. Their next goal was Bactria, the residence of the Bactrian governor.

They had never passed through such wild regions, and the army murmured repeatedly; for their road lay through gruesome forests where they had to hack their way with axes. The campaign so far had been child's play, even though it was sometimes bloody.

These regions presented a hard and disillusioned front. The soldiers could not even win distinction, for the only attacks they had to repel were inglorious ones made by deceitful natives to harry them in their advance. In Susia, the first town they reached in the

province of Areia, the Regent, Satibarzanes, came out to meet them and offer his surrender. He seemed courteous and gentle, despite the malice in his eyes.

He repeatedly kissed the ground at Alexander's feet, saying flattering words in his most elegant Persian. The King thought him rather unpleasant, and he was worried by the penetrating aura of cheap perfume with which he was surrounded: on the other hand he liked his subservient manner.

The news which he brought was sensational and alarming: Bessus had proclaimed himself the Great King, he was wearing the crown he had stolen from poor Darius, and with raw audacity he called himself Artaxerxes, Master of Asia.—This story Satibarzanes, who knew how to put things well, told with suitable indignation, although a little treacherous grin unfortunately played about his restless mouth.

There was only one thing left for Alexander to do: relentlessly to follow Bessus, for he was presuming to attain what he, the Macedonian, had actually been ever since the conquest of Babylon and Persepolis.—In great haste he gave gifts and showered praises upon cringing Satibarzanes, and once more betook himself eastward.

All of a sudden there was a revolt in the rear. It

was not for nothing that Satibarzanes had grinned so deceitfully: hardly were the Macedonian forces out of sight than Bessus' tricky friend had already broken his word of honour, given only to lull Alexander into a false sense of security. Artacoama, the capital of Areias, was the centre of the revolt. The Macedonian envoys were attacked and slain, and their leader assassinated.

Alexander saw himself cut off, so he had to forego the pursuit of the usurper—for *the present*, as he obstinately decided. When he had returned to the faithless capitals, he found them full of confusion and panic. Satibarzanes had already left, having sought refuge with Bessus.

Although Alexander knew that the rebel troops had really been seduced, he nevertheless ordered a massacre: thirteen thousand were partly slain, partly sold as slaves.

The Regent Antipater reported a serious situation at home.

King Aegis of Sparta had had an understanding with the Persian fleet and had had Crete occupied by his brother Agesilaus. He went so far as to cause a

public revolt; old Demosthenes indefatigable as ever, heckled the crowds from the forum and demanded the renewal of State Independence, by way of moral support.

The situation was dangerous; yet the letters from the Queen-Mother remained quarrelsome, obstinate and overwhelmingly personal.

The policy she pursued was stubborn and often confused. With a pertinacity which no one could understand or approve, she insisted that she was the lawful mistress of Molossia. In her letters she was for ever complaining about Cleopatra, her anæmic daughter, whom she had never liked and now hated; for the latter had pretensions of the same kind.

The poor little thing had become a widow, and there was no question that her son was the legitimate heir to the Molossian throne: as she was a minor, however, it should have gone to her, anæmic though she was. The gods alone knew whence Olympias derived her claim.

In any case her hankering after this throne, which was in no way lawful, seemed completely crazy at a moment when the whole of Greece threatened to revolt against Macedonia.

The King read the judicious, intelligent, though

always rather clumsy and pedantically worded reports of the highest officials with anxiety; but those of his mother, which were overwrought and quarrelsome, with grief.

At last the tension decreased: Antipater's messenger announced a victory of the Macedonian troops over the Spartan rebels near Megalopolis. Everyone uttered a sigh of relief: Aegis himself was dead, and the rebellion squashed, but only after the Lacedæmonians had put up a valiant defence.

Alexander offered congratulations to his regent; at the same time he wrote to his mother, and more severely than he had ever done:

"Your behaviour, which does not always seem sensible, makes it difficult for me to carry out what you yourself commissioned me to do. I have travelled far, but have not yet reached the goal by a long way. The worst is still before me. The task grows ever more difficult.

"Never forget that I am suffering on account of your commission. It is your dream which I am realizing with a thousand torments.

"Oh, my mother, I write to you with blood-stained hands."

## II

Seven passes lead from the high valley of Cabul over the Hinducush to the basin of the Oxus.

When Alexander issued his orders to the army to cross the mountain range, the soldiers believed he was now really demented. They knew of no instance in the history of any nation at any time where an army would have found it possible to traverse such mountains. On top of all this it was winter, and it was well known that Bessus, who was moving more and more to the East, had pillaged and devastated the country. They murmured, but Alexander came and stood before them. He drew himself up with flashing countenance as he was in the habit of doing before the most momentous battles.

“If it is for no other purpose than to become immortal, you will cross these mountains. Nothing can be impossible for you, I am your King.”

Matters were even more ghastly than they had feared. To prevent the men from starving, they had to slaughter the horses; the water, which they carried with them in skins, gave out. They ate snow and raw



meat. The villages through which they passed, could offer them nothing, not even bread or a bed. Many were frozen to death, fell over precipices or were left lying by the roadside.

On the fifteenth day they reached the first Bactrian settlement, Darpsacca, and a little later the capital. Everywhere they found that Bessus had just departed, vanishing towards the East. He seemed determined to lure the Macedonians on, to fool them, and to entice them farther into the centre of this boundless continent of Asia.

Now at last they had reached the very heart of Asia; this they told themselves must be the birth place of Zarathustra, from here it was that the doctrine of good and evil had spread over the whole of Iran.

Alexander gazed across this majestic and barren scene with a look of gloom and veneration. How harmless was the debauched exuberance of Asia Minor and fat Babylon, compared with the barrenness of this scene, where in a boundless plain of debris and aridity primeval mountains raised their blackish craters. In the face of this barbarous landscape the King, with set teeth, realized that matters were now growing truly serious.

One step further, and they would be finally and completely in the wilderness. The great desert lay before them: there would be countries and no frontiers to them: there neither Persians nor Greeks, neither Zarathustra nor Dionysius were known. There the cannibal Scythians reigned supreme.

*"We have come to the frontier,"* Alexander thought with horror, as he looked across this region.

They were obliged to depart from Bactra, for Bessus had already reached Sogdiana, accompanied by a detachment of cavalry and a few grandees, among them the deceitful Satibarzanes and a very dangerous man called Spitamenes, who was satrap of Sogdiana.

Bessus, tough and muscular though he was, appeared to be getting exhausted. Since he had acquired power, he was not as consequential and clever as when he used cunningly to covet it. The sombre-eyed Mongol had then evinced a certain barbaric *élan*. Since he had changed his name to Artaxerxes, he seemed fitted only for flight.

His friends began to grow weary of him, the artful Spitamenes in particular. One day he sent messengers to Alexander who revealed the whereabouts of Bessus. Alexander thanked them, and sent his

gentleman of the bedchamber, Ptolemy, along with six thousand men. At last this most objectionable of all his enemies was caught.

His penance was horrible. Alexander, thoroughly roused and weary, wanted to see him whine. So he ordered him to be placed on the street along which he rode with his officers: naked, wearing only his iron chains. The Greeks laughed because the much-feared assassin of the King was small and misformed. On his yellow, muscular dwarfish body his hair grew in irregular bunches, more especially on his scarred chest did it cluster in little pointed beards.

Alexander, looking down haughtily from his horse, asked why he, a satrap and favourite, had murdered his Great King and stolen his tiara. The squint-eyed fellow, with a final, pitiful attempt at diplomacy, and bowing in his naked state, replied: "To please you, my King."

This earned him a further flogging.

Already half dead he was transported to Ecbatana, where he was ordered to be executed on the next feast-day.

The frontier behind which lay the Scythian wilderness, was protected by seven border fortresses, the most important of which were Cyrus and Gaza. In

these Alexander left Macedonian garrisons, while he himself camped a little further on, by the river Tanais, which was called Jaxartes, the Great Stream.

The King was not by nature inclined to suspicion, despite all his experiences: his self-confidence was too great. He believed Spitamenes' word of honour as implicitly as he had believed Satibarzanes'. Curiously enough it did not occur to him that this fellow who had betrayed Bessus, a confederate, would be still less faithful to a stranger.

Rather was he surprised when a revolt started behind him. He was beside himself, because now he realized that he was seriously and bitterly hated; and he was accustomed to being loved. The situation was as bad as years ago when as a youth he succeeded Philip and had to fight in every direction. It was even worse, for at that time he had little to lose; now however, his enormous daring seemed to avenge itself. Above him a power seemed to collapse which he had thought established once and for all after the conquest of the royal towns: namely, Asia.

With lowered brow and sombre eye he strode up and down in his tent, dictating orders. This attitude, this bitter play of muscles round his mouth, was not new. That was how he looked when he dared to fight

for large stakes, and when he realized that he had risked his all.

Behind him was the Sogdianian revolt, led by Spitamenes; in front of him were the Scythians who were growing rebellious. In the border towns his garrisons had been killed. From beyond the frontier, from the steppes, new hordes came down upon them every day, killing and stealing.

Alexander dictated from his tent: Not a man in Gaza and Cyropolis was to remain alive, and torches were to be thrown into every house.

His orders were carried out with relentless precision. Everywhere the Macedonian army marched through the country inflicting punishment; four days later it reached Maracanda. They left behind them burning cities and the mad howls of the Barbarians. If I am hated at all, thought the King with determined obstinacy, then let it be thoroughly.

He had become accustomed to savouring every human reaction to the uttermost limit of its possibilities. Wherever he had gone before there had been shouts of joy, flowers and songs; but now he was greeted with abomination and despair. He had brought peace and liberation to Asia Minor, he had been at once a favourite and a liberator; in Sogdiana

on the contrary, he left oppression and misery in his wake.

Spitamenes had already fled, this time to the hordes of the Massagetes. After the chastisement of Maracanda the army, which was no less than a plague to the country, marched to Zariaspa for their winter camp; it was situated in the Bactrian.

Their mode of living had become more luxurious, but less riotous. The enthusiastic *camaraderie* which had bound them together by the Granicus, had long since disappeared. Between the King and those who had been his friends, stood the Persian dignitaries who paid the monarch divine homage by kissing the ground at his feet. With them Alexander grew more and more intimate.

Among the Macedonian generals too, there was a good deal of tension and suspicion, and everyone belonged to some party. Philotas, the brown-haired, conceited son of Parmenion, was the most vainglorious of them all. Perdicas and Craterus believed that they were the most meritorious from a military standpoint,

while Hephaestion was still the favourite and confident of the King. Clitus stood apart, for no one felt at home with him.

Then there were the scribes, those who, like boastful Callisthenes, talked grandiloquently about Hellenic freedom and criticized the King's every action; and other parasites who glorified Alexander with their flunkeyism; merchants who made their little usurious profits, and harlots who travelled with the army for lucre.

Since they had got to know something about the comfort of the East, the army lived in a more comfortable, even sumptuous manner. Everyone had his idiosyncrasy, one had gold nails on his shoes, another had the sand for his physical exercises carried after him on camels. They were very lavish with ointments and refined essence, also with unusually pungent dishes. The Persian style of dress was more and more adopted, some even setting great store by their long, waisted costumes which they wore in a foppish style. Finally Clitus was the only one who still went about in a short, wide leather tunic.

Thus the winter passed amid their quarrels and self-indulgences. A special rôle in the camp was now beginning to be filled by a charming and at the same



time doubtful character called Bagoas, who had been sent to Alexander from Babylon as his own personal page. In intimate conversation it was rumoured that this creature with his pseudo-delicate complexion, who was a clever dancer and let his silky black hair fall right over his artistically painted forehead, was a hybrid like his demoniac namesake, once the evil spirit of the Persian court. Alexander had a very good notion about why he was so attached to him.

Their winter rest did not last very long, for the devilish Spitamenes again made himself felt. He invaded Sogdiana with his Massagetes and when they wished to oppose him, he retreated shamelessly into the wilds.

Never had Alexander and his soldiers hated anyone like this man; it was as if Bessus' severed head had grown again, but more ugly than before. He was the horrible spirit of the Steppe, the irritating goblin of the heart of Asia. He fooled them till they were nearly demented. Hardly had he appeared, hardly did they reach out for him, but their hands were empty, and he had vanished into the desert with an echo of mocking laughter.

He carried on this impertinent game for months. They were months of martyrdom for his opponents.

He was unconquerable. His agility seemed supernatural. He was the devil incarnate.

The generals were more than desperate, but Alexander would not give in. If their tormentor were more agile, they would be all the more tenacious.

Finally it was the Massagetes who tired of the game. They were afraid that some day they would really be conquered by Alexander, and then in a horrible way. They therefore fell upon their leader Spitamenes, cut off his head and sent it to the Macedonian King.

He stuck it on the point of his sword, and with it stepped in front of his army. He raised the trophy high, while drops of blood fell on his shoes.

Thus he stood before the silent rows, a heavily stooping, blood-bespattered herald. "We have got him!" he cried over their heads; not beaming victoriously, but overtaxed and gloomy, despite his satisfaction.

### III

The more gloomy, violent and incalculable the King was, the more evident it became that Clitus was more and more the favourite of the army.

The young general, who absented himself as much as possible from all public discussions and hardly ever gave orders, had always had a little circle of followers. This circle grew. Since all the other officers and dignitaries were ill-tempered and cruel, his quiet and dreamy gaiety was considered a blessing.

He appeared to stand above material circumstances. For this reason he was worshipped. The counsels which he used to offer as an aside and as if in jest, always hit the nail on the head in a most astounding manner. Thus it happened that little by little they were taken more seriously than those of anyone else.

With all this, he was not himself interested in his political and strategic talent. He still despised reality as he did when a child. Now as then men of repute were the object of his ready, scornful attacks. He made fun of reality by which he could have arrived at anything. No victory did he take seriously, nor would any defeat have moved him.

His mind played in spheres where the air is more ethereal, in which no mortal can prosper. Where he felt at home all the problems, tragedies and difficulties of this world appeared to be dissolved in

amusingly intricate figures which danced in and out of one another in geometrical patterns.

His enemies said that he was childish, that he could take nothing seriously. They were mistaken; for it was not that he could not stand the test of reality. It did not seem to him worth while, because it was all so dreary. He allowed another to become great through reality whom he himself had helped to such greatness from sheer curiosity, playfulness and a most secret affection.

Far more than by the battles between Asia and Greece was he attracted by the adventures and decisions of such points as his imagination conjured up. He was too chaste to take part in the battles of matter. Just as he kept his body free from human touch, so also he was mentally bored by anything that had weight and volume.

As he was absolutely pure, so was he completely cruel. Sympathy was as foreign to his heart as ambition.

In the course of the years he had not come a step nearer to Alexander, on whose gigantic fate he, with Olympias, was the only one to have any influence.

On the other hand an alliance of a subtle and unexplainable nature seemed to have developed be-

tween him and Hephaestion during the past few months. After so many years of persevering, tender renunciation and hopeless wooing for Alexander who grew ever more unapproachable and enigmatical in the midst of his solitude, something in Hephaestion seemed to decrease; a readiness which had been tried too severely, a loyalty which began to feel senseless because he, for whom it was meant, did not recognize it, but ignored its existence.

Clitus never spoke to Hephaestion about Alexander, for his highly sensitive good-feeling forbade his raising this subject, he only told fairy tales when they walked together. Hephaestion was the more gratefully attached to him; he realized with a happy surprise that the unapproachable Clitus made his voice become more human and gentle for his sake, only for him. "It is out of pity," he said to himself; yet it made him feel proud.

In the evening Clitus assembled his friends near a well or a pillar, Hephaestion among them. Clitus squatted, spinning yarns, sometimes laughing quietly and aimlessly moving his hands. His face was as child-like as ever, in his soft cheeks there lurked a knavishness, on his brow was a pleasant, yet earnest sincerity. When he interrupted himself, it was always

to let his eye wander round his audience with an opalescently dark and enticing look.

“Nobody jumps more quickly than my dragon-pig,” he continued his original tale in a child-like and complicated way. “If it is left in peace, it is quite droll, but if one teases it, oh, oh—”

Under the spell of his puzzling, lucid and quiet words they all listened with bated breath.—Meanwhile Alexander seated at a grimy table was bawling with his mates.

After a great banquet which the King gave for his officers, Clitus was invited to tell one of his magical stories; it was more especially Hephaestion who urged him to tell it. “We all want it!” he cried fervently; and suddenly, a little confused to Alexander: “You see, he tells such pretty stories. No one has ever heard them before, and he interweaves them with other stories—” Clitus smiled enigmatically.

Alexander, seated at the head of the table in his Persian state robe, beckoned briefly without looking at either of them. “He shall tell us a story.—But a pretty one,” he added with a threatening laugh.

“Probably you already know the tale which has

been in my mind a great deal of late," said Clitus without paying any attention to Alexander and with a mocking reflectiveness which was disquieting. "Anyhow you will like it.

"Listen: you are in Uruc, that great and splendid city, whose powerful prince is called Gilgamesh; he is two-thirds a god and only one-third man. That must be disagreeable—" he laughed, cruelly amused at the sufferings of the demi-god. It seemed to Alexander he was looking at him as he laughed.

"He was very ambitious, supposedly for Uruc, but in reality for himself. Uruc's splendour was to show itself in every town, he proclaimed noisily. In reality however, he himself wanted to radiate splendour.

"The people whom he handled so cruelly in order to spread his fame, in their need and helplessness turned to the sky-god Anu. The latter got in touch with Aruru who knew the mysteries of creation. He decided to create a fellow, Enicdu by name, who would be as the wanton Gilgamesh, so that Uruc's king would have an opponent and his wantonness diminish; one who would become a nuisance to the gods and an object of fear to all men."

Clitus smiled and stopped. He looked at his restive and bronzed hands which were firm, but tender. "The



sequel is wonderful," he said smilingly. "In order to paralyse Enicdu's naïve strength,—for he played with the fierce animals of the desert which was a wonderful sight,—Gilgamesh in his great cunning sent him a woman, a marvellously skilled woman who was dedicated to Ichtar. In a love-game, which lasted six times four-and-twenty hours, she broke his strength, and Sidu lured by her charms, initiated and spoilt, suddenly grown restless and curious, followed her to Uruc, the capital whose splendour shone far around. Gilgamesh, who had been waiting only for this, easily defeated the weakened man in a duel, but at the same time he strained him lovingly to himself, as one does with a woman."

Clitus closed his eyes for a second, and Alexander did likewise. For one whole second they both listened to their inner voice, perhaps even to the inner voice of the other. For they knew that now was coming the story of a great friendship which might have been theirs, but which had not fallen to their lot.—It was therefore in a brighter and more resonant tone that the story-teller continued.

"The friendship between the two grew by leaps and bounds. Gilgamesh made this youth, whom he had intended to slay, the first man in his kingdom; Enicdu

suffered him like a magnificent animal, which one exalts and adorns. They loved one another with all the power of their strong and godly souls."

Clitus laughed, allowing his opalescently darkened look to wander around his audience, and stopping at Alexander: "I think it is charming how the old goddess Aruru miscalculated this business. She longed to create a horrible opponent for Gilgamesh, and instead gave him that which brought both meaning and delight into his life."

Hephaestion also laughed in a gentle and emotional manner. Clitus went on with his story.

"Unfortunately Enicdu sometimes had ugly dreams; perhaps he could not accustom himself to the life of a town, which was very luxurious. They offered sacrifices to the sun-god Shamash, so that matters might improve: they filled a bowl of reddish stone with honey, and a dish of lapis lazuli with butter, for the sun to lick up. But the divinity would not be appeased by food alone: she demanded adventures of them. They were told that they must slay Cumbaba, the evil one, who trafficked in his wicked way by the god-mountain in the cedar wood.

"As the premonitory signs were favourable, the two friends set out; but the venture was terrible.

Nothing could be so alarming to look upon as Cum-baba: his eyes were of fire, his jaws spat poison, his genital organ was a hissing flame. With his fiery horn he gored them both, hurled them a thousand yards through the air and then tried to trample upon them as they lay on the ground. But they were faster than he. With their spears they dug into his neck. By their combined efforts they finally succeeded in slaying him."

A sigh of relief went round the circle, an expression of their satisfaction. Alexander too, who was bending forward, listening with enraptured eyes, took a deep breath. They had conquered with their combined forces!—But Clitus continued now in a triumphant tone.

"Embellished by the joys of their friendship and the satisfaction of victory, Gilgamesh grew to be so indescribably magnificent that Ichtar herself, who knew what she was about, made advances to him. Now she had picked the right man.

"The hero abominated her obese voluptuousness, shouted the worst of insults in her face; he was daring enough to call her an wine-skin that becomes a burden to its bearer; an elephant who shakes off his covering; a shoe that hurts its wearer. He told her his

opinion more plainly than anyone had ever done, and sternly reproached her with all that she had ever done wrong, her evil actions, her blasphemies and tricks; finally with *all* the lovers she had ever had—and they were not a few—how disgustingly she had treated and played with each one of them.

“Ichtar screamed, stamped and, planning to avenge herself, ascended into the sky.”

They all knew Ichtar, even Alexander, and how cruel as well as charming she could be. Therefore they listened with suppressed excitement for what would come next.—It was even sadder than anyone could have thought.

“First of all however Ichtar, who underestimated her opponent, sent the snorting dragon-steer against Gilgamesh, that the monster might trample him to pieces and tear him to bits. But Gilgamesh, fighting side by side with his friend Enicdu, was unconquerable, and destroyed the monster. When the beast had breathed its last, he in his scorn wrenched out one of its shoulders and threw it into the face of Ichtar, whereat the latter began to dance, to sing and to rejoice in her passionate frenzy.

“But then she got him where he was sensitive,” said Clitus, and all the listeners knew what that meant.

“She sent Enicdu, his belovèd, a fever. The beautiful creature lay there bereft of his strength and oh! in his wanderings he refused the maiden who had once upon a time lured him from his wilderness, his innocence and solitude to Uruc. With his last breath, he uttered the wish that all thirsty and drunken persons might smite her on the cheek.”

At this point Clitus gave a smile that was at once sardonic and sad, causing a fury in Alexander which grew and grew and which he could not at first comprehend. Sadly and at the same time sardonically, Clitus continued.

“These maledictions particularly grieved Gilgamesh; for without the maiden, whom Enicdu was now execrating, the two would never have come together.—Enicdu died in the arms of his friend without knowing him again. Gilgamesh was terror-struck.”

Clitus himself ceased, sorrowfully shaking his head. “For after all they had performed such great deeds together,” he mused, shaking his head. “Now the King moaned: You look melancholy and do not hear my voice.—He spread his mantle over him as over a bride.”

Alexander became alarmed at himself, for now he

only felt enraged, not sorrowful. His rage increased as Clitus continued.

“In Gilgamesh’s big, but impure soul, fear for his own life mingled with profound sorrow for his only beloved, a fear which was even more profound and violent. If this man who seemed life itself, had died, how easily it might have taken him, Gilgamesh. So he was afraid and his teeth chattered.

“In his agony and helplessness he set out to visit the initiate Utnapishtim, who lived at the end of the world and could disclose to him the secret of life. The journey took years, and at the end of it the Prince of Uruc, whom the world had known adorned with precious stones, had only lousy rags and skins upon his back.

“He passed through all the towns of humanity and then through the wilderness and the desert, finally through enchanted districts, past dragons’ castles, and through the almost impenetrable kingdom of scorpion-men, through confusing forests of precious stones, and lastly to the great water that lies at the end of the world and behind which dwells Utnapishtim. Further than that no mortal had ever gone; Gilgamesh had to go farther, for he was full of fear and desire to know

the connection of everything in the world and how to win eternal life. He therefore persuaded the boatman Shanabi to take him across the water, and this meant more pain, exertion and deprivation than any one man had ever taken upon himself. This man bore them because he was avid for knowledge.

“His first question to Utnapishtim as he received him with astonished dignity, was: *what* is death. The initiate replied with reserve: Furious is death, he knows no mercy. There has never been anything lasting.”

They all saw Alexander motion as if he wanted to command the narrator to stop; Clitus alone seemed to notice nothing, rather did he become more and more explicit in his narrative.

“Instead of paying any further attention to Gilgamesh’s endless questions, Utnapishtim told his own story which was very wonderful, for he was the only one ever to have survived the flood with which the gods had once upon a time chastised the human race when it had grown too voluptuous and criminal. As Adad had broken up the whole country like so much trumpery and had raged so terribly that even the gods crept into their hiding-places like dogs, the very, very clever



man took refuge with his family and a few animals in the vessels whose measurements Ea herself had given him.—How deserted and solemn was the stillness as he left his boat again and saw how humanity had suddenly turned to earth. ‘Tears trickled down my face,’ concluded the old man who had been granted immortality by the gods.

“Gilgamesh listened breathlessly, but there was a beseeching and imploring look in his eyes for the ‘real thing.’ The very, very clever man had pity on him, and disclosed the secret to him: If he would climb to the bottom of the sea, he would find there the promised herb which brought life.—Gilgamesh in his ardent desire tied stones to his feet and went down into the deep. There he came upon the herb he had set out to seek; it felt prickly.—Now he could start for home. In his gratitude he took with him Shanabi, the faithful boatman.

“On his way, as he was bathing for a little refreshment, a snake smelt the miraculous plant which he had hidden on the bank, with insufficient care, and it stole it from him while he was splashing about.—So he had wandered all those long years in vain, and was returning without the secret even as he had set out, except

that he had grown much older, almost an old man. He ruled in Uruc, but it was a joyless rule. The good Shanabi continued as his Minister."

As Clitus ceased, an oppressive silence made itself felt in the circle. They were all under the spell of his sorrow. Only Alexander held off, suddenly laughing while all the rest looked into their wine-cups with an air of depression. This laughter, which had begun in a rough, but heedless way, ceased under Clitus' gaze; with a cruel calmness it encountered the sombre and agitated look on Alexander's face.

While he was finishing his story, Clitus did not lose sight of these torpid grey eyes whose black pupils seemed to expand. He was now speaking to him alone in a mournful, lowered voice that was at the same time clear and silvery; the rest of the party he had entirely forgotten.

"It was only a few years later that Gilgamesh succeeded in meeting Enicdu's shadow, and he managed this through the lord of the underworld Ereshcigal.

"The two did not become really acquainted, they remained aloof. Gilgamesh, in whose heart there was nothing but a thirst for knowledge and a fear of death, yearned to know the 'real thing'; Enicdu could find nothing comforting; not that there was even love

between them. Only that it was terrible to be dead, he explained. 'See, the friend that you embraced that your heart might rejoice, he is being devoured by worms, like an old garment.'—That was really the whole of their conversation.

"Then Gilgamesh hastily put a few questions, but the deeply afflicted shadow only replied: 'If I were to tell you how the under world which I have seen, is arranged, you would have to sit down all day long and weep.' Even now Gilgamesh was weeping. Finally all he wanted to know was what fate awaited the spirit who had no guardian on earth; for he himself had no guardian, despite all his splendour—: 'Did you see such a one?' he therefore asked in his fear. The shadow replied:

" 'Yes, I saw him: he had to eat what was left over in the dish, and the scraps that had been thrown out into the street.'—With that he vanished.

"Soon after the prince of Uruc died, although he was two-thirds a god. All his life he had been restless and unbalanced, with an unquiet heart."

They all sorrowfully lowered their heads, Hephaestion's gentle face was covered with large tears. Clitus was still gazing at the King.

The King ordered wine to be brought in, thumping

the table with a loud blow. "You do know pretty stories," he said to Clitus; his words and demeanour alike were unnatural. But Clitus only smiled.

The King drank and became even more riotous, inviting the party to coarser jokes in which he himself joined. As with a red and bloated air, his eyes already grown glassy he urged and almost compelled everyone to drink more liberally; many observed how much he resembled his father.

Although a number had found him uncanny, they all bawled with him. After half an hour everyone was drunk or apparently so. In a mass of screaming, obscenely joking, tottering and vomiting soldiers, Hephaestion and Clitus were the only ones who remained silent, the one fearful, restless, uneasy, the other quiet, pensive and aloofly cheerful.

At the end of the table one of the *literati* and practised flatterers had conceived an idea which was generally considered excellent: It was decided that everyone was to make a speech in praise and appreciation of Alexander, his deeds and his glorious person. He who made the best speech would be awarded a small golden object. The stupefied Alexander seemed to like the idea; at the bottom of the table someone was already starting his panegyric.

He lauded his hero to the sky. Too long, said the babbler, had one praised the achievements of the older heroes, of Heracles, Perseus and Theseus; had not Alexander, the Macedonian, surpassed them one and all by a long way, nay, had he not even put the heroes of Homer to shame? "Thus the grandson surpassed his ancestor: Alexander became greater than Achilles!" His concluding points the mendacious man thundered out with self-satisfied pathos; everyone clapped their hands. Even Alexander applauded, but briefly.

For suddenly he fixed his eye which was no longer glazed, on Clitus. With a hand which trembled only a very little, he pointed at him: "Now he shall make a speech in my honour," he said slowly and threateningly, with a heavy tongue. And as Clitus was still smiling, and not even looking at him—his brow lowered furiously, and his eyes underneath burning black,—Alexander went on:

"Here at the table there sits one who despises me and who will not speak in my praise. He considers me to have been always restless, unbalanced, and of an unquiet heart. And I am to eat what was left over in the dish. That is what he is offering me. Shall I tell you why? I once disturbed him very much, I once almost spoilt his figures, and he has never forgiven

me for it. If he knew how he has disturbed me ever since I can remember, ever since I have been alive—Oh!”

As he put back his head and screamed, no one knew whether he looked miserable or furious. He stood, a desperate and misfortune-bearing god, surrounded by fear and cold curiosity, alone as never before at the head of his festive table, his head sunk back, his mouth painfully open, and his hands cramped together.

Meanwhile various friends urged Clitus: he must speak, otherwise there would be a disaster. As Clitus rose, his face was as bright as ever, although a shade more pale. It had the wan glimmer of a pearl, and from his smooth forehead in particular there went out a lustre under which the eyes, which could look cruel as well as cheerful and peaceful, were dominated by enlarged pupils.

He began to speak in a very low voice; but every syllable was clear, and quite distinct. Alexander, with ears keenly alert, his mouth half open, listened as eagerly as if the decision of his whole life, on which his happiness and eternal sorrow depended, were here and now to proceed from that mouth.

“It is generally said that you have accomplished

great deeds," he heard Clitus say. "Of course I understand nothing of that. Nor did I pay much attention to it, for I had other things to think about. In the world in which I live, Alexander, you have not been able to alter anything. You have not even disturbed me. *I do not know you at all*," he said slowly and looked at him with a merciless thoughtfulness. "When I did think of you, I only felt compassion for you. Did you not lie at my feet?"

He did not get any further, for Alexander had snatched the halberd out of the hand of the guard, standing at his back. He wielded it, and before anybody could scream, it had left his hand.

Clitus collapsed slowly. No one had heard a single sound of pain or fright proceed from his mouth which became white as his shining brow.

After spending three days and nights alone in his darkened tent, Alexander thought the gods would be merciful to him and take away his reason. A thousand times had he thought out to the end the fate he believed he deserved, and now he hoped that even *his* capacity for suffering was exhausted. "Give me darkness!" he implored the great powers. But the light remained,



and with it the consciousness of his solitude which was becoming unbearable.

He permitted Hephaestion to come to him, and received him with gentleness and composure. "Kill me!" he asked tenderly. The other started back, not knowing what to do, and in his helplessness seized his hand as he had once done on the boat. "Kill me!" Alexander asked him a second time. "Here is my sword—"

With a gesture which expressed all the weariness which had descended upon him in these three times four-and-twenty hours, he pointed to the weapon which lay beside him. "Won't you do it!" he demanded gently. And sadly turning away from him, he added: "If I do it myself, I have no one to take care of me."

As Hephaestion would not take the sword that was thus pleadingly tendered to him, Alexander turned away more disappointed than ever before. After a long pause he said thoughtfully: "Did I really love him, Hephaestion?" Hephaestion choked with tears, nodded.

"Yes, I did love him," sorrowfully decided Alexander. Now he was weeping too, more, it would seem with weariness than with pain. He wept without moving a muscle of his face, and his tears flowed plentifully from eyes unaccustomed to such luxury.

“Do take the sword!” he asked once again; but then allowing himself to yield at last, he sank into Hephaestion’s arms which firmly closed about him.

“Instead of killing me, you kiss me. You kiss me instead of killing me.” Hephaestion who was rocking him like a child, did not know whether Alexander kept muttering these words out of gratitude or as a real accusation; finally he fell asleep.

## IV

On their expeditions a number of soldiers of the great army had unwittingly passed over the territory of the Amazons, who were so offended that they sent women envoys to declare war upon them.

At first there was mockery and laughter in the camp and even Alexander was diverted by the incident. He thought it might be amusing to fight against these armoured ladies, it would at least be a change. The mood of his soldier-gang was bound to improve when once they had conquered this original enemy and the prisoners were in their tents. If one could judge them all by these envoys, the warrior-maidens seemed to be as pretty as they were enterprising.

It is true that there was not much feminine rotundity about them, but they had had enough of that in Babylon. Their breasts, it was said, had been cut away, but this very circumstance was considered rather enticing by the Greco-Macedonian soldiers: a female sex with the hard, slender and well trained bodies of boys appealed to them. And how well they held their heads! No Greek, Persian or Egyptian woman's eyes flashed so bravely and merrily, or so wildly.

In the best of spirits they set out for this contest which they regarded in the light of a particularly pressing courtship of a stubborn, but most desirable maiden who refused with obstinate coquettishness to yield to any man.

To their great surprise the battle took a serious turn. The lovely hybrids would stand no nonsense, rather did they fight cruelly and relentlessly. One could see that they were morally roused, indignant and revengeful. For decades no man, not even the King of the Persians, had ever dared set foot upon their territory, and now the subjects of this upstart Alexander were there.—The young Queen and Commander-in-Chief, Roxane, was especially full of fury; the arrows *she*

hurled, always hit their mark, and they were also the most venomous.

On the very first day Alexander's soldiers realized that they were in for a bloody battle, not an erotic joke. There were many dead. No enemy had ever been as rabid as this. Weapons, stones and projectiles flew unexpectedly from various ambushes; a radiant creature would jump from a rock and onto a disconcerted warrior's shoulders; then, biting, throttling and smothering the wretched fellow, she would thrust her short sword into his neck. When an imprudent soldier tried to avenge himself on a particularly beautiful prisoner by assaulting her, twenty others would suddenly appear as if they had sprung out of the ground, and tear him up into gory little pieces.

Now the men also pulled themselves together. If ever their honour was at stake, it was now. They had managed to overcome Darius and Bessus, so why not these armed furies?—Now they even learned the ecstasy of cruelty; those whom they captured they no longer violated, but strangled, cutting up their faces and breasts and the organ which would not yield to them. If only they had the Queen! Alexander himself would have to kill her.

What a triumph, the army of women began to retreat! Still fighting and daring to advance little by little, they thought to reach the enemy's fortress. The latter was said to be absolutely impregnable. It was said of the rock on which it was situated that only winged soldiers could take it. Even when the rock was captured, there still remained the iron gates and thick walls, and from the little dormer-windows the wenches poured burning oil and hurled their death-bringing arrows.

The last who was seen to disappear into this fortress was Queen Roxane. She bowed sardonically, waving her hand, and shouted something shrill; at the sight of her erect figure the soldiers down below felt a shudder go down their spines.

The most sinister rumours were current in the army concerning her debaucheries and cruelties. In a muffled voice they would tell each other about the little children she used to slaughter, of the beasts on which she was wont to ride, of the forms of exorcism, the spells and indecent cults with which she was familiar. Many compared her to Olympias, but she was without question still more terrible.

When Alexander was told such stories, he would

motion to stop. This was an enemy like any other: enemies were there to be conquered.

Not even before the battle of Issus had he been in such close conference with his generals. They all knew the meaning of those gloomy black eyes and of that determined play of the muscles around his mouth. But his voice had never sounded so full of determination, or so cold.

The plan of attack which he submitted to his generals was as cunning as it was bold. It was certainly the most audacious he had ever devised.

Two days later Alexander's army had stormed the fortress of the Amazon Queen. They were already in the halls, a section of the masonry was on fire, and from smoking ruins there rose the infuriated cries of women.

In every hall the disfigured corpses were piled up high, never had the soldiers wrought such havoc.

Through an entangled mass of twisting, bleeding, struggling and collapsing bodies one could see the King pushing his way unceasingly: through all the rooms right up to the Queen's apartment. He stopped in front of her door, his weapon raised, a banished

man; suddenly he perceived Roxane: armed and alone, she stood erect in the hall. She greeted him with a calm and solemn look; under red silvery enamelled eyelids she had green and black, very serious cat-eyes.

Thus do they gaze upon one another, who have known each other for a long time without even being aware of the fact, and who suddenly, and with great surprise, discover: We belong together. We have only to prove ourselves of one another now, we have been predestined for one another from all times, unconditionally, and irrevocably. We have nothing more to do now, but walk up to each other and join hands, if we will dare.

They advanced towards each other with small, sleep-walking steps such as hypnotized persons take. When they thus unexpectedly stood opposite one another, so close that their heads almost touched, they were both startled. They did not dare lower their eyes before each other, although their eyes were mutually painful to one another.

The preparations in the camp for Alexander's wedding with Queen Roxane were very sumptuous. Alex-



ander had made the soldiers give their word of honour to treat the escort of his wife with the greatest courtesy. Nevertheless no real intimacy would develop between the troops and the armed ladies. Awkward incidents were, however, avoided and everything went off with dignity and ceremony.

A division of ladies conducted Roxane to the throne. They all walked in a dignified manner, but most dignified was the crowned lady in their midst. The young Queen had been adorned in a costly manner. Her hair shimmered golden-violet with coloured powder, her face too, was heavily painted, and her shaved eyebrows were arched majestically above the lids which were more artistically enamelled than usual. The most impressive feature was her long, curved, solemn nose, which jutted out painted in a bluish white, with purple nostrils. There was a rigid smile on the young, sharply defined mouth with its splendid teeth, narrow blood-red and temptingly firm lips. As she went towards the throne, everything on her jingled,—the pearl decorations on her head and her metal garment. Her smile too, seemed to jingle, it lay so cold, precise and relentless on her beautiful face.

When she had reached the throne, she inclined her

forehead solemnly, while the ladies of honour threw themselves on the ground. Alexander offered her his hand that she might step up to him.

At night in the tent, she appeared transformed. Silently she squatted on their couch while Alexander was half reclining apart from her. She had combed her gilded hair down over her forehead, and underneath her cat-eyes looked out; they were now sad.

Out of the darkness Alexander said softly: "Your eyes are glowing in rings, Roxane. A red, a yellow, and inside a black ring—"

In an almost wailing and trembling voice, she replied: "If only I were already the mother of your son." And suddenly raising herself up, radiantly: "So that I might wrestle in competition with him.—For that is how I am made," she concluded, falling back once more, but with a look of triumph on her face.

When Alexander, who stood in the background, said nothing, as if he were afraid, she suddenly began to speak of her mother. "You resemble her," she said, surveying him thoughtfully. Then she said she hoped the wedding gift from Olympias would arrive soon.

"For only then would I be really happy with you," she exclaimed in her quavering voice.

And still Alexander did not move. Roxane's mouth, which was very famous in all the kingdoms of the East, and which no one had ever seen other than firmly closed or frigidly smiling, trembled. Her nose stood out in a touchingly pathetic way from her now gentle and willing face: a soft radiance spread from her brow and also from her silvery eyelids. With bent neck she knelt, full of humility. Her arms which had hurled arrows, hung defenceless at her side. Her body and her face were transfigured in expectation of her spouse and hero.

Alexander raised his hands out towards her; but he stood too far off, he did not reach her. He thought, his brow blushing with shame: "By what law may I not touch her? Have I forfeited the right to my own wedding-night, because I have been predestined and equipped for a greater wedding?"

He saw how she who was squatting over there on the couch, suddenly raised herself up.

The garment fell from her shoulders, her neck and her breasts shone.—He remained at the entrance where the tent-curtains were caught up. His thoughts grew more pained and more confused. "I can not," he

thought, "or is it that I *may* not? Why may I not have a son? Why may I not touch her? Why may I only touch in order to kill? Oh, him whom I would have liked to touch the most, him I killed—"

She heard him utter a moan, and then she called him once more by his name in a voice sodden with sympathy. But he was no longer in the tent. Night had already received him in wind and solitude.

That Roxane who had revealed herself to him in that night, he did not see again. She whom he did see was stern, tense, icy cold. She carried her nose like a weapon, and under her coloured eyelids her glance was that of a calculating beast of prey. Towards the King she behaved with a devastating politeness, there was ceremony in her every movement: the way she walked, lowered her face, wore her hair and formed wicked and precise words with her hard lips.

For a short time Alexander thought to woo her, as if asking her pardon. She screamed and laughed, with her mouth wide open and her eyes closed. Laughing she turned, and ran away.

Since that scene Alexander kept away from her. The adventure seemed closed for him, and he now turned his attention to strategic and political affairs. As always after his most personal defeats he seemed to

have grown outwardly, he was more tyrannical and relentless than ever. He tyrannized his *entourage*, inflicted more severe punishments than formerly and with great cunning devised oriental tortures.

In the evening he would order little Bagoas to his tent. As he approached with narrow, cunningly sweet eyes set in a painted face, Alexander turned wearily toward him.

"Oh, there you are," he said weakly, "do come nearer. Are you still afraid of me?"

## V

It was in an uncanny, half-lit cellar where the in-subordinate page-boys met nightly with Callisthenes; they were almost exclusively Greek boys, and their leader, the ambitious and smart Hermelaus, belonged to the most aristocratic of Athenian families.

They greeted one another solemnly with a kiss and a handshake. Not one of them was more than sixteen, and many a one of such beauty and so perfect that it was touching.

Outside of their sensual circle Callisthenes, the literary man, stood alone; at the same time he was

their chief. They worshipped him for his learned Hellenic culture, and also for the fact that he was related to Aristotle; but above all they were impressed by his unrelenting opposition to Alexander.

He joined them now, his glance flashing like that of his colleagues on the market-place at home; his restless mouth, which was already a little worn and reminded one of the mouth of his famous uncle, opened and gave utterance.

"He is going too far!" he thundered, stamping with his foot, while the boys listened, their eyes full of sombre determination under their young brows. "Our conception of liberty which was of the highest, has become a mockery and amusement to him," their leader explained. "That he expects even us to greet him on bended knee is an ugly picture indeed. We must not stand by and watch this any longer, we Greek boys! History expects us to take action!"

The boys felt a cold shiver run down their backs and crept closer to one another in their timidity. They knew quite well what *that deed* was bound to be, it was sinister and elevating.

Hermelaus was the first to regain his composure. With light, dancing steps he tripped into the centre of their circle, although his cheeks burned feverishly.

"We must swear secrecy to one another," he whispered with hysterical solemnity.

They went through the ceremony of the oath, making an incision into their soft fleshy arms, and letting the blood flow into a bowl; then they murmured formulas and vows over it.

Some of them grew sick. The others thronged respectfully round Callisthenes who with a grand gesture held the bowl of blood. "My Greek lads!" he cried; then he kissed each one on his forehead. Large tears ran down their child-like cheeks.

They were horribly impressed, for a musty odour emanated from the walls, and the light of their torches threw phantastic dancing shadows. In the midst of these dancing shadows Hermelaus disclosed his plan to his friends.

Each morning three page-boys had to wait personally on the monarch. They were to draw lots as to which one of them should strangle Alexander in his bath; "which one was to be the murderer of the tyrant," concluded Hermelaus, looking around with a threatening air.

The boys looked grim and ready for anything. Their hatred of Alexander, the Macedonian dictator and tormentor of Greece, had increased year by year;



Callisthenes had done his best to fan this hatred during the past months, but in vain. This hour in which their blood had mingled in token of their federation, in which they had sworn an oath and devised a sinister plan together, was for them the most marvellous hour of their lives.

The lot fell on one of the youngest among them, a fair child with a sweet and immature face. This poor face became dead-white as the twelve-year-old child stepped into the grim circle of confederates.

"Do you feel up to it?" enquired Hermelaus. Callisthenes then repeated the question suspiciously.

The child nodded heroically, although his mouth was trembling.

After a sleepless night full of tears and chattering fear, full of prayers and wretchedness, the little fellow went to Alexander and told him everything.

Alexander insisted on personally conducting the investigation; he questioned each one of the youths individually, then collectively. Hephaestion watched him anxiously, as he stood listening in the background.

He examined and questioned them in a low, uncannily fleeting voice, sometimes giving a short nasal

laugh if the reply satisfied him. "Aha, I can well imagine—when you were lying together at night. But whoever thought of it first? It would be interesting to know."

The boys stood before him with bowed heads. No one dared look up, they knew how his look hurt. They dropped their hands at their side, those hands that had desired to kill him,—and they hung as heavy as lead.

Alexander's frigid eyes, enlarged and coal-black, looked upon their appealing and beautiful figures. With a ruthlessness which dismayed even himself, he examined their slender hips and sinewy knees; their youthful mouths and their youthful, healthy-looking hair.

"I will have all that executed."

One of the youths collapsed, his knees were shaking so. Alexander pondered with horror: "They know nothing but fear in my presence. I did so want them to love me."—They answered his questions in dull tones. But not one of them dared lie any more. It appeared to them as if this man in front of them knew everything already.

Then Hermelaus came forward with his dancing hips and supple shoulders. "His head shows breed-

ing," thought Alexander as he examined him. "A long narrow skull, and a long, rather hunchy nose. No eyebrows and a coquettishly puckered, distortedly smiling mouth."

He was the first who dared look Alexander in the face; and this he did with a sweetly timid expression, which was at the same time impudent, and insipidly malicious. "Here I am, my King—," he said affectedly. His cheeks were feverishly flushed.

Alexander surveyed him from head to foot. He saw through him, divining his innermost thoughts; nothing remained hidden to him. He was revengeful and effeminate, and intellectually weak, but ready to do anything when his vanity was hurt. It was obvious that he had been neglected; for instance, although he danced with a great deal of feeling he would have stood by while they roasted his king on a slow fire.

"You are not a little dangerous," Alexander concluded his observation. The page-boy looked down conceitedly. "Ass!" thundered the King. At this the unhealthy blush departed from Hermelaus' cheekbones vanished, and his thin face looked sallow and sunken. Alexander turned away in disgust. Again he put questions to him, quickly, in a low precise tone.

The other boys looked anxious as they stood silently lined up against the wall.

“So you were the first to plan that I should be strangled in my bath.”—With trembling impertinence which might easily turn into a weeping-fit, Hermelaus said: “I did.” “Out of spite you forgot that all that you are you owe to me.” “I know full well that all we are we are through you, my King: miserable, deserted, at the mercy of barbarians whom you favour—”

“Don’t talk nonsense,” the King yelled in his face, suddenly turning purple. “You repeat the fibs you get from Callisthenes.” Again a sickly smile appeared on Hermelaus’ unnaturally puckered mouth. “We have thought all this out very carefully. We did love you once.”—As the King showed surprise, he continued in a monotonous leaden voice as if he were reciting his lesson: “We hate you now most of all, for you have disappointed us very deeply. Anyone of us would have died for you and rejoiced at it, had you remained our leader and we your free soldiers. But you became a tyrant, you trod everything Hellenic under foot, and finally you killed with your own hand the best Greek among us, our friend Clitus. Oh tyrant—tyrant—,” he screeched, jumping about like a demented jack-in-a-

.

box, a livid red foam on his lips. His eye shone yellow, and his cheeks were again flushed, then he reeled about in hysterics.

In the midst of this epileptic howling Alexander was heard shouting to his soldiers that they should seize him. "Strangle him outside!" he cried with averted face, for it was disgusting to see how the now fettered man was dancing and foaming and twisting himself. "But beat him first. He has offended his King."

The soldiers dragged him away; suddenly he hung lifeless in their arms like a wet rag, a supple corpse. Only between his half-closed lids did there appear a pale-green phosphorescence.

The boys stood by pale and motionless, silently awaiting their fate. Many a one trembled all over, as if he were being shaken by a strong hand; others wore a sullen look, determined to maintain their courage to the end. The hysterical, scandalous spectacle just presented to them by Hermelaus had profoundly shaken them on the one hand, and on the other brought them back to their senses: *they* at any rate had now to behave decently.

Alexander's broad, monumentally still figure was nothing less to them than a supernatural being which

had power over them, and which could hardly be credited with human impulses. He was simply a tyrant.

The tyrant beckoned. The voice in which he spoke was now no longer furious and harsh, and this circumstance frightened the boys; it was rather drawling, as if encumbered by pain.

"Go!" he said slowly. "You are to go home to Greece. I do not wish to see you again."

He saw before him the long row of faces, of pale, young fear-stamped faces. He was overcome by fatigue, displeasure and a feeling of great loneliness. He turned his back on them and went slowly away.

In passing he said to Hephaestion: "Send them home. I do not like to punish them, they are stupid."—

Only Callisthenes was executed. The executioners cut off his lips, nose, ears, genital organ and hands, and he lived for weeks in a cage, rotting alive.

The atmosphere around Alexander grew more and more severe. No one dared approach him frankly. Since the discovery of the pages' plot he hardly showed himself without an escort of Persian officers.

These Easterners who surrounded him in a manner at once flattering and pompous, daily confirmed to him their belief that he was the son of God. No one

could now talk with him alone, there were always present a few dignified and intrigant grey-beards. They called him the offspring of Amen-Rah and made a clumsy obeisance at his feet. Some he permitted to kiss him, which is the highest possible honour accorded to a courtier brought up in the Persian style.—That he introduced *proskynesis* (*obeisance as to a god*) in his Hellenic-Macedonian *entourage*, increased the number of his enemies more than any other of his actions had done.

The speaker of the opposition party was Philotas who had always been grandiloquent. Many years ago his father had given the dark-haired, but over temperamental youth the following advice: “If only you would climb down a little, my son.” Philotas did not climb down, on the contrary, he grew more and more daring.

Despite his rather prominent lips this man might almost have been called handsome. Women raved about his hairy and athletic body. Dark hairs grew down his arms and down to between his fingers, also upon his well-trained and swarthy legs. His look was effective, though otherwise stupid, and his gait like the boastful walk of a military traitor.

The speeches he made concerning Alexander were



as disrespectful as they were foolish. He was convinced that only his father Parmenion and he were responsible for the Macedonian victories; the King enjoyed a fame that was not at all legitimate.

Such babbling naturally came to the ears of Alexander, and everyone saw the storm that was collecting over Philotas' head. But the latter continued his tirades.

Alexander had him closely watched; and at last there was occasion to arrest him. The suspicion which rested upon him, was a painful one: he had not informed the King,—as soon as it was divulged to him, Philotas,—of a plan on the part of some disgruntled officers to assassinate him. That was as bad as having a personal share in the plot.

All his swearing and boasting did not help him, his monarch had reason to find him guilty, and the following day he was executed in full view of the grim and silent army.

Alexander witnessed this spectacle from a raised platform, attired in his robe of state and surrounded by his nobles. Not a line in his face changed, it was observed, when the friend of his youth pleaded for mercy. With a perfectly steady hand he beckoned to the executioner.

"I shall make a clean sweep of all this," he cried in a horrible tone over the heads of the assembly.

On the same day he sent messengers to Ecbatana, where the unsuspecting Parmenion with the side-whiskers had his residence. He quickly ordered the King's envoys into his presence, it was a long time since he had heard anything from Headquarters. But what they brought him was no military news; the trio of the King's delegates slashed him with three knives: two got him in the chest and one in the throat. That had been the commission of their master.

The old man remained upright, and the three messengers stepped away from him in horror, his look was so terribly angry and reproachful. With the classical gesture of great pain he lifted both his arms; his voice thundered, although the knife was in his throat. "Tell the tyrant who sent you that with me there dies the last free Greek. My curse will be a danger to this tyrannous régime. I go to the gods to speak against him."

The circle round Alexander's table grew very quiet. There had been too many horrible things to remember: the tragedy with Clitus, the rupture with Roxane and their childlessness; the pages' revolt, and the execution of Philotas and of Parmenion, who were

counted among the most faithful servants of the royal house of Macedon.

But the King seated at the head of the table, said with a sombre and radical satisfaction, as if he enjoyed sitting in solitary state: "He who was guilty of treason, has been destroyed. Now we may proceed."

The army was informed that this time they were going as far as India. There was no open opposition, but a sullen silence. "He is taking us to the ends of the world. What do we want there?" they scoffed among themselves.

But he joined them and, in his threatening and at the same time luring voice, which still enraptured them, he said:

"I will take you to the ends of the world."

# *Corruption*

## I

**H**e who met them on the border of his country was none other than Prince Taxila seated on a wonderfully decorated elephant. The white animal wore grapes of pearl on his soft ears, and a little turret built of gold, mother of pearl and silk upon his back, in which sat the Rajah amid cushions and much sumptuousness.

Taxila and all that belonged to him were well-disposed toward the Macedonians, not only from kindness of heart, but especially from calculation, for they hoped the stranger would help them against their strong and wilful neighbour, Porus by name, whose fortified capital was situated by the Hydaspes.

The country beyond the Idus appeared to be largely peace-loving, only a few still daring to offer resistance, for instance the people of the Aspaiaans whose city had to be destroyed. The Assacenians too, were said to be arming themselves. But worse enemies had been conquered, and their capital, Massaga, was finally taken.

After their strenuous adventures in the mountains these districts were as misleading to the soldiers as a

dream. In a gentle, alluring country grew almond-trees and laurels; they had never seen such blossoms anywhere.

Gentle as the beautiful cultivated land was also the doctrine of the saints who sat in the forest doing penance. They were so meek that Alexander's soldiers were often frightened. They were not ready for such wisdom, and yet it touched their hearts in a wonderful manner. They fought against such an emotion, which they regarded almost as a weakness.

They were beginning to grow less fond of fighting than formerly. It used to bore them if results had been obtained by peaceful means; now they were grateful.

The pleasant country whose capital was Nysa, was governed by thirty men of noble character. Here the Greeks were particularly reverently received, for the inhabitants of Nysa claimed to be the descendants of Dionysius. It might well have been, for they were so tall of stature, brown-skinned and very clever.

The Hellenes listened with respect when these well-built strangers, who claimed to be related to them, told of the deeds and adventures of Dionysius. He was the only Westerner who had previously come into this enchanting country. Alexander's soldiers might well

look upon themselves as his successors, and this made them feel proud and devout.

Once again they loved their King, the King they had almost hated. Once again it was the god of the Greeks who led them. They understood his intentions as little as ever. But since he was leading them into prosperous country, their faith in him was restored.

Prince Taxila put his citadel at their disposal; it was considered the finest city between the Indus and the Hydaspes. None other could have been as lovely: it shone with temples in whose carvings gods, animals and plants were sumptuously intertwined. In the large, sweet-smelling gardens, among rosy and violet bushes, the blue water lay peacefully in the white marble interiors of the basins. White peacocks spread their tails, a twitch running through their whole body, a kind of vibratory conceit; there were other coloured birds with shining plumage, golden-bronze beaks, and purple malicious eyes. Decorated elephants trotted through the white stone alleys, from which rose singing, sweet odours, and warmth. The successors to Dionysius could not believe they were still on this earth: they must be in the promised Paradise.

Meanwhile Alexander received embassies. Many Princes sent gifts as a symbol of their submission. Porus alone, of whom everyone spoke with anxiety and veneration, remained defiant. He sent a message that he was awaiting the King fully armed on the border of his kingdom. So they had to be prepared. When the soldiers returned to the camp from their expeditions, they would tell one another the wildest and most impossible things. They vied with one another in the most prodigious stories, and each one had a more fantastic story to tell than the last.

They crouched in a circle beneath the luxuriant plants, as it was not a quiet night, they could not sleep in any case. An odour and a wailing emanated from the heart of the forest. The monkeys performed gymnastics; many of the soldiers had seen fat, coloured, puffed-up snakes which coil themselves around the trees. As even the birds were screeching and fluttering about, one would certainly have been afraid alone. As things were, they preferred to lie in a circle telling stories.

Big lions, giant snakes and elephants were no longer interesting enough for them. But there were prickly scorpions, as large as dogs, which jumped and crawled about in a horrible way. It was impossible to escape



from them, for they could also leap far. They killed only out of cruelty, and never ate human flesh. But in their vicinity one found white foxes with red eyes, and these devoured the victims of the giant insects; many a soldier had seen it with his own eyes.

Others had come across the six-handed monkey-man, who was hairy and smelly. He could throttle six persons at once, one in each hand. He laughed at the same time, but in a horrible way, with a muffled bleating sound, growlingly amused: the noise was loathsome.

Another had made the unpleasant acquaintance of the enchanted fruit-tree. It stood in the centre of a meadow, was broad, beautifully shaped and solitary; the fruit it bore shimmered so enticingly and exuberantly that even for India it was something unusual. But if one wished to pluck one of these fat pears, the most unmerciful blows came beating down on one's face. Wielded by a completely invisible hand, the branches would rain blows on the innocent evil-doer, while a voice roared so loudly that one was paralyzed with fright and could not run away, but stood still, covered with blood.

Thus in India one never knew what was sacred and when one might be transgressing. The gods alone knew what irascible forces dwelt in these fruit-trees.

“In our trees also, there are divinities, but they do not chastise you directly you wish to pick some of their fruit.”

Some of the soldiers had also had pleasant experiences. For instance the young cavalryman who, on the summit of a mountain, had sighted a shining palace. Two thousand steps of sapphire led up to it, and at the top he discovered that it was made entirely of precious stones, hence its glow. Partly to plunder, partly because an incomparably delicate and heart-rending music lured him, he entered the palace. This music, the cavalryman reported, was a melting and warbling, a wooing for love, as of a woman cooing. All the gates had sprung solemnly open; even the bells—golden bells—had pealed enchantingly to welcome him.

In the heart of the palace where the music was most amorous, he found a fairy-like princess laid out on a bier, covered with a purple cloth, and wearing precious stones on her feet, her wrists and in her dull black hair. Music streamed from her resting body which was so bewitching that the rider had to close his eyes.

“You have no idea into what abysses I sank,” he told his comrades, enchanted by the memory. “There

is nothing to which it may be compared, it was so amazingly pleasant a descent into hell. Do you know how I awoke? A cold and tender hand touched me—: tender, imagine it, and yet icy cold. When I opened my eyes, the princess had raised herself up, as dead persons might raise themselves up, quite stiffly. She seized hold of me, she had almost drawn me to her. What a wonderful death that would have been in her arms!—How did I tear myself away from her, how did I get down the steps of precious stones? There was a magic singing behind me.—The pressure of this sweet enchanted hand I shall never forget,” he concluded dreamily; they all observed how he inwardly rued not having followed this pressure and thus having missed a wonderful death in her arms.

The young blond, with whom they were affectionate as with a child, knew another charming story. In this story too, there was music; it also had to do with maidens, but with many, and they were living. It is true that they lived and led an existence different to that of most human maidens. They were to be found in a forest; again it was singing that led one to them. But this time not of a voluptuously amorous kind, rather a splashing, clear “as a mountain stream,” said the young blond, smiling at the recollection. The

maidens, it appeared, lived in the chalices of flowers, they were tied to these chalices, grown into them. But this did not hinder them; they were happy to be alive.

They themselves were delicate as petals, white and quite transparent, naked moreover, with charming minute little pointed breasts. They laughed at one another, they joked, played, and made fun with each other, they sang and played ball. The young stranger they received with shouts of joy and twittering.

“I was with them for three months and twelve days,” said the blond quietly and ecstatically;—they all knew he had been away only two days, but they nodded gratefully, because his young and sympathetically veiled voice was pleasant to their ear—“it was the happiest time of my entire life.—And it will always be that,” he concluded mournfully.

He also reported, choked with tears, how his amiable miraculous maidens met their death. “They can breathe only in the sun, and cannot stand the shade. Well, when the shadows of the trees got longer and longer, they grew more pale and worried. They did not laugh any more, and many a one clung fearfully to me—”

Thus the young blond’s adventure did not conclude more happily than the others.

But those who returned claiming to have been to the end of the world, Alexander ordered to his tent.

He was resting on his couch in the background when the two foot-soldiers entered ponderously, out of the semi-darkness he gazed at them with his drawing, and at the same time gentle and imperious look: "You claim to have been at the end of the world?"

The soldiers muttered something and hesitated. Alexander, suddenly sitting up, asked with a curiosity that was child-like and naive: "*How did it look?*" The two growled something into their beards; Alexander, impatient and with a dangerous severity, said: "Speak distinctly, when I question you."

The two bearded men were disconcerted and stuttered all the more: the sky turned like a wheel; there had been a great storm, they thought, a muffled roaring.—Alexander felt repelled and motioned them away. "You do not know anything at all," he said languidly. And when the two did not move: "Why don't you go? Be off!" Flashing with anger, and raised to his full height, he yelled at them: "You have lied to your King! Be thankful that I do not have you flogged!"

When the two had stampeded out, he sank back

into the darkness. "They know nothing either," he repeated.

Tortured by his immense curiosity as by a disease, he groaned, his hands pressed to his temples: "If only someone knew! If only someone had seen it!"

## II

In the remotest groves sat those who did penance. There they squatted haggard and naked, their pimpled skin the colour of loam. They scraped their leprosy and sought for enlightenment. Any Macedonian soldiers who came upon them, regarded them with repugnance and at the same time with respect.

Many a learned man had they seen thus sitting in the mire; at home they were called cynics, because they did as the dogs do. Here they were called *Gymnosophistae*, for they were without clothes and aspired to wisdom.

People tried to mock them, but their glance remained gentle and even proud in their humility. When the soldiers tickled them with sticks and stalks in their matted beards or their crusty ears, they smiled in-

dulgently and invitingly. They raised a threatening finger; what they muttered no one understood, but it was probably something modest and devout.

Alexander asked to be taken to those of them who had a particular reputation. They greeted him with a quiet, unperturbed courtesy, as they would have greeted a common soldier. The King was startled by their eyes which had a look of blissfully pained aloofness. In their mouldy faces, coarsened with dirt and leprosy, these eyes shone with a superhuman power.

"Teach me!" pleaded Alexander, who was in the habit of listening to strange revelations. One of the old men replied courteously, but sternly: "*You may not listen to us.*" "Why not?" asked Alexander, somewhat hurt. "Instruct me!" he asked once again, with vehemence.

With a gentle severity they shook their degenerate heads: "Your spirit is restless. You must look into yourself. Sit down on this stump and do not speak one word for twenty-four hours."

All three motioned with their withered hands to the place he was to occupy. His thirst for knowledge was stronger than his defiance. For a moment he hesitated, as if to flare up; then he sat down to keep his silence.

It was difficult for him, for he was accustomed to



anything but quiet. Thus thoughts came to him which were almost unbearable; and especially did he think of Clitus.

“Console me!” he pleaded at the end of twelve hours. But the musty old men shook their heads with a quiet unapproachableness. He had to spend another twelve hours of introspection, and he was afraid of what he saw. He observed that his innerself was unfathomable, and he grew giddy. “Where do I look when I look into myself?” he asked himself in dismay.

At last they motioned to him that he might ask questions. He asked them hastily, for he was in as dire need of consolation as a wounded man is of a bandage: “Were the actions I performed good actions?”

Their reply was enigmatical, as if they knew all his thoughts: “The nature of action is as deep as an abyss.” After a long pause they added:

“He who sees in action inaction and in inaction action is a judicious person, who performs each action with piety.” After a still longer pause one of them, with a dreamily gliding look, said: “*To him action resolves itself completely—*.” Whereupon all three closed their eyes and said nothing.

A breath of peace and at the same time of horror

was wafted to the King from their speech. For a few seconds he felt that everything he had done and achieved was flowing into space, was suspended; also that which he was still to do. While this frightening peace was still like a breath on his forehead, the three dirty learned men were already talking of the breath they called the first principle, the foremost of the gods.

“It is the wind which draws everything to itself,” the first one began with singing and alluring emphasis. “When the fire goes out, it passes into the wind. When the sun goes down, it passes into the wind. When the waters run dry, they pass into the wind. The wind draws all these to itself.”

When the first one had terminated his dreamy sing-song, the second began in an equally sweet and equally monotonous tone.

“It is the breath which draws everything to itself. When a man sleeps, his voice passes into the breath; his eye, his ear, the *manas* into the breath, the spirit—”

Alexander, who had been watching and looking into the abyss for twenty-four hours, was already asleep. In his sleep he heard the third man say with his grinding tempting voice:

“Prana, the breath, is Brahma; kam, joy, is Brahma; kham, the ether, is Brahma.

“Breath of life, space, sky, lightning—that is what I am, revealed by Brahma.”

In deep slumber, so goes the doctrine, the individual soul became united with Atman, who is the chief soul. Only when Alexander was tired, was he receptive; only when he was asleep could the recital of the initiate reach him. They could sing to the gentler breathing man the secret of the infinitely formed, never revealed, mild, peaceful and immortal lap of the Brahma; only his peaceful self was receptive.

They took it in turns to chant a solemn melody.

“Brahma is food,” said the first.

“Brahma is breath,” the second.

And the third: “Brahma is spirit.”

Again the first said with great emphasis: “Enlightenment is Brahma.”

The second said nothing, whereupon the third proudly concluded:

“Bliss is Brahma.”

It became evident that Brahma was *everything*, the nature of every manifestation composed of thought and bliss. He had many names; but if one gazed at him devoutly and profoundly, he was always the same.

Alexander asleep discovered how man can best ap-

proach the Brahma. Alas, he himself had done the wrong thing from the start; these clever voices recommended as the way for his redemption not descendants, not wealth nor good works, far less war-like deeds which were stained with blood; no, they recommended renunciation. It was just this that he had never practised.

When the sleeper asked the old men what redemption was, they were all three silent and looked down with an inscrutable smile. But peace still proceeded from their silence, a peace that was as mysterious as it was seductive.

Instead of replying, they again began giving instruction on the approach to Brahma. What a carefully indicated and mysterious way of approach it was!

“The wise man passes into the flame,” began the first with a chanting ceremoniousness. “From the flame into the day; from the waxing half of the month into the six months, from the sun into the moon, from the moon into the lightning. Only there will he meet with the spirit man, who is no longer human, and who has led him to Brahma.”

Then the second in a mildly confirming tone; “That is the path of the gods, the path of Brahma.”

Prophetically the third one concluded: "He who has reached this path never returns to the human vortex.—Never returns," he repeated with a delightful, hollow sound.

Now the sleeper began to have an inkling of the meaning of redemption: Not-returning; "no rebirth to be endured any more," that is how they put it. His "ego" wished to rebel, but the temptation was still the stronger.

It seemed to him as if he were being borne along a gentle stream, in a small boat which rocked silently. He had never been rocked in such a bewitching way. All around him there was a dissolution of colour and form. What he had thought to be matter, proved to be delusion; it was with a feeling of delight that one saw it evaporate. Nature, dream and spirit melted into each other, everything became divinity, and finally the divinity nothingness.

The ocean to which one was being driven with this sweet rocking movement, was nothingness; the man driving downstream knew it without admitting it; it was luring in its formless, bottomless, infinite way. First came enlightenment, then bliss, then dissolution which liberates from every fetter.

The instructing voices whispered and deluded; how

long had the King slept with the three old men? A little longer of this deep slumber in their midst, and perhaps he would never have risen again.

For the ocean was quite close when, with a final effort, he opened his eyes. He noticed that he was cold, and this brought him to his senses. It had got chilly, and it was also raining. Above the trees which stood in darkness, the waters gurgled quietly.

At first Alexander thought he was alone; then he noticed that the old men, who were a few yards away from him, were all three squatting by a tree; their eyes shone dimly in the darkness, like damp wood.

They beckoned childishly when the King jumped up and shook himself. He felt as if he had escaped from a hypnosis. Now the three old men could do nothing but mutter under their crusted beards.

And it was only now that they uttered their best and final piece of wisdom.

“He who in all creatures sees himself and himself in all creatures, he passes for that reason alone, and no other, into the highest Brahma.”

Their voices had lost their seductive power, they were now merely cautionary and weak. Alexander was already hurrying away, bending the branches

apart with violence, and treading upon flowers and little animals.

The three old men gazed after him through the rainy night with eyes painfully glowing, as he offended creation by departing from the path of enlightenment, of bliss and redemption.

The breath against which Alexander had transgressed, avenged itself: as with his army, he was facing the forces of Prince Porus on the river Hydaspes there came a cloud-burst and violent gale. Nature was revolting against the intruder.

The swollen river was raging and roaring, the rain blinded their eyes and lashed their faces; even the elephants seemed to overstep their duty and become cruel and wild with personal indignation.

There were two hundred of them, separated each from the other by a distance of fifty feet, thus occupying a terrain of nearly a mile. When they roared and beat the air with their trunks, the Macedonian horses drew back in absolute panic. Any foot-soldiers who dared to venture close to the rabid giants, were immediately pierced by their tusks, or seized in their trunks, thrown into the air and trampled to pieces.

Porus as the heaviest man sat on the largest of these



animals; over his white garment his face looked black, with thick lips and golden eyes, almost like a negro's. Although these eyes, which were at once sombre and radiant, appeared to be sightless, the Prince aimed with a devastating precision. Every one of his long, poisoned arrows hit a Greek soldier between the ribs or in the throat.—Porus continued to take aim when he was bleeding from many wounds. From his master's body, which was as invulnerable as bronze, the elephant with his trunk extracted the arrows and darts of the enemy.

It took longer to decide the outcome of this battle than it had done on any occasion when Alexander was leading his troops. His soldiers were almost swallowed up in the sodden ground. They fought simultaneously against the enemy, against the bog which prevented them from storm-attacks, against the incessant rain which hurt their overtaxed faces, and was a torture to their nerves; against the elephants whose trumpeting din made their horses shy, and whose tusks and trunks were more dangerous than any weapon and brought a worse death.

Had Alexander relaxed for one instant, it would have meant a definite and final defeat for his troops. His example which was superhuman, saved the situa-

tion. The Prince's elephant fell, and then the other elephants also gave up the fight.

### III

For some time past there had been a whispering and gossiping in the camp concerning the fabulous riches of a certain Indian queen, Candace by name. There was therefore much satisfaction when at last her envoys appeared before Alexander.

The magnificence of their appearance confirmed all the rumours which had circulated about the great riches of this Queen; but this was especially true of the gifts which were carried in solemn procession past the Macedonian King. There were small golden gods with diamond eyes, and some of ivory; there were five hundred birds of many different colours in cages of the finest metal; they could sing, and also talk; there were parakeets and chaffinches. Black slaves, half-naked, led tame tigers on coloured, prettily plaited reins, as well as lions and leopards which smelt of the desert and slouched gracefully along in the procession, half-ducking as if about to leap. These

were followed by twenty-five white elephants, pompously decorated, ridden by nigger children; all the soldiers had to laugh, because the solemn children looked so frightened by their bloated faces and large, hanging ears. A painter had also been sent with the procession, and he very artistically made a portrait of the King on a wooden slate.

A lady who could introduce herself with such gifts as these was at least as powerful as the boldest legend made her.

The envoys took their departure after a few days, having received gifts in exchange; these were tasteful, it is true, but could not bear the slightest comparison with those which the strangers had brought with them.

A few days later a gentleman appeared with a large escort, who claimed to be Lady Candace's son, and said his name was Candalaus, and that he had come to see the King on an important matter.

Alexander was in a mood for masquerades, being in a rather doubtful state of mirth which verged on the ridiculous. He decided he would make a fool of the Prince, and promised himself some fun.

He gave him a reception, but his body-guard Ptolemy was made to represent the King, and Alexander assumed the name of Hephaestion, while the real

Hephaestion, who was worried by the joke, stood anxiously in the background.

Candalaus fell down before Ptolemy and handed him a gift. The false king, very clumsy in his assumed dignity, took the gold-laced basket filled with dainty fruits and precious stones, with a grandeur that showed embarrassment; the Prince, who thought the Macedonian King very dignified and reserved, made his request on bended knee.

His trouble was: his young wife—who must have been most desirable according to his description,—had been carried off by a brigand chief to a castle built on a rock. Candalaus who was not naturally warlike, but rather delicate and affable, did not know what he should do. It had come to his ears that the Macedonians were as brave as well as a noble people: so he asked on bended knee whether they would come to his assistance.

Ptolemy cleared his throat in an embarrassed and affected way; finally he said arrogantly that as a monarch he was too much taken up with other things to occupy himself with a private matter of this kind, but that he would leave it to his General, the brave Hephaestion.

Alexander stepped forward with an amiable, but

modest air, making a low bow. He felt honoured to be allowed to help the Prince—if his master permitted him to do so, he added respectfully. Ptolemy nodded, embarrassed, yet gracious; he felt ill at ease when Candalaus again covered his feet with his kisses.

To break the defiance of the brigand chief, they set out with a small division of tried men. Alexander made everyone call him Hephæstion, till he himself almost believed he had been transformed; this flattered him strangely and bewildered him in a very agreeable way.

“So it is as easy as this to lose oneself,” he thought dreamily. “How care-free I feel.” He gave himself up to this freedom as to a sweet and forbidden joy. In Bactria such a game would have disgusted him; India had transformed him very much.

It was not difficult to conquer the brigand chief who had acted so fiercely; when he caught sight of the Macedonian cavalry, he was overcome by fear, and his beloved was restored to Candace’s son. With tears in his eyes he thanked the General who maintained his attitude of modesty and reserve.

“Alexander has faithful servants,” said the Prince vigorously, shaking hands with the officer. He was so overjoyed that he suggested he should spend a few

days in his mother's castle. "She will be happy to make the acquaintance if not of the King, then of his best vassal."

On the way to the palace Candalaus questioned the General concerning many of Alexander's peculiarities. Deceitful Hephaestion replied with vigour and precision. "Is Alexander very pious?" asked the inquisitive man. "Does he believe in every one of the gods?" "In every one of the gods," said Alexander with alacrity.

He had to inform him how long Alexander was in the habit of sleeping, what he ate, and how he treated his friends. His replies in each case were disinterested and complete. "What a delightful game," he thought as he talked about himself. He enjoyed the licence and frivolity of the situation without compunction.—

Candace was no longer quite young, but an incomparably magnificent lady. The robe which she wore, had a caught-up train and was made of a soft, embroidered, sparkling fabric; the wide skirt and puff-sleeves were decorated with flowers, birds and figures. Pearl grapes and diamond roses hung from her hair; her white hands were also heavy with diamonds and blue and red jewels. She was rather broad, a severe critic would have called her almost fat; but this was

easily overlooked, since her demeanour was charming. Her milky-white skin seemed unblemished, although unnatural, for its beauty was mature and testified to expert treatment.

She greeted Alexander seductively raising her eyes, when he was presented to her as the General. "My son owes you a great deal, and so do I," she said in a dignified, and at the same time inviting manner. The reception banquet was spread in the large entrance hall of her palace.

There was a fragrance inside which made one close one's eyes; the gods knew what she was burning. Silver and blue vapours rose into the air from little coloured vessels.

When custom had adapted the eye to the semi-darkness which was saturated with pleasing aromas, an impression was gained of being in an enchanted hall. Palms and flowering bushes grew from out of the walls, and under the ceiling whose dome was lost to space, suns, moons and planets circled in the purple-golden light. Black parrots sang in their cages like nightingales; monkeys performed gymnastics between the various fittings, chattering and bickering with one another; prettiest of all were the small yellow, red and green cats with gilded paws.



Madame Candace was seated at a round table covered with fragrant vessels; Alexander too, was made to sit down. The meal was served by dwarves, of which there were at least one hundred. They all wore pretty little skins, which were grey, printed or coloured; they trotted about with wrinkly, solemn faces. From the bellied bowls which they carried, rose the steam of exotic dishes.

Alexander ate with a good appetite. His hostess rested her lethargic, silkily shining face in her heavily jewelled hands and watched him with a drowsy tenderness. "How is your appetite, General?" she enquired.

Afterwards, in the heavily carpeted cabinet to which she conducted him, she handed him a long, silver pipe: "Let us smoke!"—and stretched her limbs till the ornaments on her bosom and in her hair jingled. She handled her pipe with a placid grace, as a shepherd does his flute.

"I have never smoked," Alexander declared; and he sounded rather peevish, although he had eaten and drunk well. She swayed about, intent on charming him. "Please, General!" she cooed pleadingly. "It will do you good, dear Hephaestion."

When she called him Hephaestion, he again felt

flattered and agreeably confused. "No, I won't," he retorted, but gently. "*You are not you,*" she said suddenly; and then he felt as if he would sink into the ground.

With accomplished, graceful movements she roasted the brownish poison over the little flame which was burning in a small lamp. The preparation had a delicious odour, as with silver instruments she put it into the pipe; then she made him lean over the flame and draw with all his might.

After the first puff he thought he would be sick; but he heard her sonorous flute-like voice reassuring him. "It is quite harmless,"—and she laid her cool, fleshy hand on his burning forehead. "Close your eyes!" she advised in a singing tone. But he preferred to keep them open, for he liked to see her large face bending over him with its broad, dullish white cheeks, her sleepy eyes, and her broad, vulgar half-open mouth.

"Do you like not being yourself?" she asked lasciviously.

"Very much," muttered Alexander, who was losing consciousness.

"Shall we sleep together?" she asked, luring him with her veiled eyes. "I do not sleep with women,"

retorted the false Hephaestion. "You don't," she teased him, "but *you* do—not you, because you aren't—yet really you, oh, how much—"

The moist kiss with which she stifled his reply, smelt of spices. "Don't kiss me like that!" he growled again. But by this time he had closed his eyes.

He took a few whiffs of the silver pipe, then the ceiling vanished; the walls too seemed to part. In a dreamy blue vapour he saw circles and figures advancing towards him.

What the three old men had taught him, now crystallized into a live adventure in the most inclusively sweet way. When he was with them, flight was possible; now it was too late.

The struggle with his "ego" was forgotten; it was bliss to let himself sink. Action above all, now counted for nothing; if it was anything at all, it was sin. It was inimical to enlightenment; but these enticing dream-faces wafted enlightenment to him through the live darkness; it is true it was very indistinct and vague, but it was the enlightenment that leads to the heart of the universe which the prophetic Indians called Brahma.

"Not you, because you aren't—yet really you, oh,

how much—," Candace cooed above him. Impotent he sank into her outstretched arms which closed around him coolly and softly.

"She has given me the Indian love-potion"; thought Alexander, as his senses left him. "Candace has already conquered Heracles and Dionysius with it—"

She asked him to pronounce the syllable Om; he did this, for he wished to get as near as possible to the great ecstasy of enlightenment. "Om—Om—Om. Om—," he babbled monotonously, a hundred times. He lost the consciousness which was ordinarily a part of his life, and in exchange he approached another unlimited something of which he became a part without a name.

Dissolution into the wind, so went the doctrine; to become an integral part, to gain peace—

How did this unmoral fairy-tale end, when the ecstasy of a surrendered consciousness was accomplished? Was there not a grotesque sequel the recollection of which was very nebulous?

Someone slipped into the apartment, it was the younger son of Candace, Character. What did he want? It appeared he was a friend of conquered Prince Porus, and that, to avenge the latter, he had come to murder Alexander's general. Was there any blood-

shed, or was there only a risk of it? Did the Queen stretch out her arms, was there a clanging of metal, and did Candalaus rush in to save the stranger's life, since he could not defend himself?

How did he escape? Did the cool night receive him? And how did he reach his couch, the tent into which Alexander in his disguise sank ecstatically, because for the first time in his life he had been conquered?

The following morning Alexander awoke with pained compunction. That which he had permitted himself last night was the very thing that he ought never to have permitted himself.

He felt especially guilty toward Hephaestion: had he not misused his name and his friendship in a disgusting way? For this very reason he was vexed by the quiet reproach with which the other met him; it made him defiant.

"I must be more deliberate with myself than ever," he said with severity.

Then he summoned his army for the purpose of acquainting them with his plans. "We shall go on," he announced in a curt and strangely irascible tone. "The whole of the East is awaiting us: the country of the Ganges with its inimitable treasures, and beyond, China, then the end of the world. The boundaries of

this earth shall become the boundaries of our kingdom. We have still a great deal to conquer.”

He spoke as enthusiastically as ever, and his eyes shone; but the troops instinctively felt that he was exhausted. The light in his eyes was feverish; he stretched himself with an exaggerated gesture. Thus they dared to gainsay him, and a murmur greeted his speech.

They were to go still further? Not yet home? What did they care about the end of the world? They murmured that they had seen enough. What did the Ganges, what did China matter to them?

Enraged he cried: “Who dares go against me? Then they all answered in a chorus: “We do—we—we!”

That the fellowship which he had despised as a dull one could ever become stronger than he, the individual, who had both passion and will, seemed incredible to him. What he here experienced, in face of this insubordinate and yelling crowd, he interpreted as a direct punishment for the forbidden frivolity which he had permitted himself the previous night.

Therefore he did not contradict them, but retired silently into his tent, not to appear again.

This time the soldiers realized that they were the

stronger, and they also suffered his non-appearance for three whole days. He had to give in, renounce, yield to them. This was unprecedented, and he did it gnashing his teeth.

The stream Hyphasis, which was to have been the point of departure for the East, became their halting-place. There they turned back.

## IV

On the rivers the devout and patient natives, as they worked in the rice-fields, saw ships that were strangely impressive with their coloured sails. Surely there must have been a thousand of them. Some, the battle-ships, were rigged out in a threatening way, others were uncovered and used for the transport of the horses. Everyone in those boats was surely armed, for there was a rattling of swords, lances and shields.

Thus the wild hunters passed down the streams and towards the ocean in a riot of noise and colour, bringing devilish misfortune in their wake. Thus did they, the nothing-but-evil, rattle towards the ocean which might well swallow them up. The devout and patient natives in their rice-fields gazed after them with a



shudder; they screened their eyes and turned away their brownish, gentle faces in dismay.

They knew so much about the terrible havoc these blood-stained fellows had wrought in their great, peace-loving country. How many elephants had not died of their venomous arrows.—The devout and diligent men in their white shirts shook their heads as they gazed after the ships, which rolled downstream. Sometimes they would leap and quiver in a horrible way; this happened when they had to pass through a whirlpool or a rapid; but they always managed to escape disaster. They surely had supernatural powers.

Their young leader was doubtless a son of the gods, but an evil one. It was said that he could kill with his eyes. His eyes had a death-bringing light, they seemed to be composed of circling rings—red, green and black ones. It must have been a gruesome sight.

Whenever one thought to have captured him, he escaped with a great noise and magic power; thus it happened in the capital of the Mallians for instance. There he had suddenly flown from the city walls right onto the market-place, where they surrounded and thought to capture him. But he gnashed his teeth till it sounded as if fifty shields were clashing against one another; he flashed, stood with his legs apart, killed

a few persons with his eyes, and fluttered away in an ugly fashion.

From the Mallian capital this face had become known throughout the entire country. An evil god, no doubt. Since then no one dared to touch him again, although some advised it, the priests in particular. For it was they above all who hated him. In vain did they adjure the people suddenly to attack and punish him; they were afraid.

Alexander succeeded in crossing the rivers unopposed with his fleet, and passed on to the ocean.

In the evening the soldiers were discussing their affairs over the fire.

"Alexander has dared this expedition to the unknown ocean almost alone. Only a few sailors are with him."

"What does he seek in the ocean?"

It was the young blond who replied: "He seeks the end of the world." They nodded, overcome.

"He will have to fight against monsters," he opined. "They say there are sea-dragons."

"But he is stronger than they," the young blond concluded confidentially.

"This ocean is different from any other ocean. It is the world-ocean. No Greek has ever sailed on it."

And again they heard the young blond, this time his voice was so resonant that everybody turned towards him: "He is more than a Greek. His father, who dwelt in the oasis, will assist him so that he can walk over the waters."

His face shone so brightly in this belief, that they all gazed across at the ocean. They thought they already saw their King walking over there on the horizon.

This same horizon was the goal of Alexander's expedition. After two days the sailors enquired whether they might return, their provisions were growing scanty; but he shook his head: "We have not yet got nearer to the horizon." They consulted with each other in whispers: Shall we turn the ship against his instructions? But at this moment he looked at them till they realized that his pain, his rage and his insatiable curiosity were worse and more dangerous than all the turmoils of this ocean.

He stood in the bow, his hands on his back, his brow obstinately lowered as if he were pressing it against an impenetrable wall. Thus he stared across the ocean and toward the horizon.

This was changing in colour; but it made no difference, it did not come any nearer. From a deep blue

it changed to a mother-of-pearl grey; it grew darker and withdrew in a surging black, only to allow its cold, pale-blue line to rise again after the disconsolate hours of waiting. But it had not come any nearer.

"It has not come any nearer," the watcher in the bow realized with bitterness.

Did sea-monsters come playfully to the surface for breath and tease him in his solitude? Yet he remained obdurate and never smiled. The clouds played their prettiest games for his benefit; they grouped themselves in rosy masses, forming ladders and gates as if inviting him to fly up and stay with them. He did not fly, although he could certainly have done so if he had chosen.

As the ocean could not seduce him, it threatened him. In the night a storm arose, the black waves threw his small boat from one side to the other, and hurled themselves onto the deck, but the silent man with the obstinate brow stood firm, wet to the skin with the salty waves which nearly washed him away, —and still he did not move.

He gazed into the infinite which towered menacing before him. "The infinite is trying to rebel against me," he muttered scornfully between his teeth. "It will not allow itself to be subdued by me, it is violent

with hatred. It will not yield to me; then what have I achieved?"

Six days later the people on the shore who had already given up their King for lost, at last saw the brown-sailed ship returning.

She rose out of a calm evening sea, presenting a quiet, melancholy appearance. Her contours quivered with a silvery light and her brown sails stood out against a solemn and radiant sky. Slowly and impassively she approached. Those on the shore wept at the sight without knowing why.

He who squatted in a corner of the deck had blood-shot, dead-tired eyes. They hardly recognized their King. His head was bowed.

"Once again he has not found that which he sought," the sailors told one another in timid whispers. "He has not spoken one word to us all the time. But he did speak with others, though we did not see them."

A few days later Alexander summoned his entire army. He proclaimed his will.

"I have resolved that my army shall be split up into two parts for the return march. With one half I shall take the high-road across the Gedrosian country; my

Admiral, Nearchus, will return with the fleet by sea.

“We have much to discover. It must be possible to cross from the estuary of the Indus to the estuary of the Euphrates. This discovery will be our legacy to humanity. A little less of this earth will then be unknown, a little more will have been conquered by us.”

## V

At first they came across myrtle bushes which had a pungent odour in the sun. In the vicinity of the rivers and small lakes grew the tamarisk and the spikenard root. There were still human settlements here, although the inhabitants were only the dull-witted Ichthyophagi.

As they squatted and babbled, they looked poorer and more degenerate than decaying animals. They fed themselves on stinking fish and stale water; their huts were built of fish-bones. They could not direct the soldiers; if they were questioned, they grinned with a vacant look. The more intelligent among them pointed in the direction of the wilderness with an idiotic and quivering gesture.—Their faces were re-

how long had the water-bags been empty? How many soldiers had met their death in the sand? Was it one-half or three-quarters of his troops?

Had there not been some among them who had struggled and fought with one another under the camels for the privilege of being allowed to drink their urine? And did not others, who had become mad, stuff their mouths with sand, spitting, yelling and laughing?

Everywhere there was moaning, complaining, collapse and decay. Everywhere under the scorching sun a great stink, drought and again decay. It was surely not in vain that the dwarfish Ichthyophagi at the entrance to the desert of the damned had grinned and gesticulated. This little pack of muck had given them their last warning. The Gedrosian desert they had pondered, could it be worse than other deserts? Let us see you, Gedrosian desert!

The stiff-necked rider on his languishing horse bowed his head. "So that is the paradise for which I set out."

His eyes encountered those of another man, lying in the sand, and they were weary unto death. Oh marvel: the eyes in this emaciated young face shone brightly, while all others were complaining.



“Of what are you thinking that you can rejoice?” asked Alexander, stopping his horse.

The young blond could do no more than whisper, his lips and tongue were parched. “I believe,” whispered the young blond.

And Alexander, bending down to him: “But you are dying—”

The young blond nodded smilingly; “You have been walking on the water,” he whispered, transfigured. “You will lead them out of hell—back to your capital.”

# *The Angel with the Bandaged Hands*

## I

**I**n a few brief words the King ordered General Hephaestion to march with the greater part of the land-army along the flat coast in the direction of Susa, while he, Alexander, chose the more direct road through the mountains, past Pasargadei and Persepolis. Hephaestion received his orders with a brief and solemn inclination of his head and tendered his thanks to his Majesty for the confidence he had placed in him. While he was dictating these polite phrases, he thought to himself: "This means separation for another few weeks; even the last few weeks he has hardly seen me, he must have forgotten my face by now—"

Wherever Alexander went, all those who had behaved unjustly began to tremble. He had no time for parley; he collected evidence and meted out punishment. His decrees were issued relentlessly, and formulated precisely, everybody realizing they were final.

The first to be deposed was the satrap Aspastes of Carmania; he had been suppressing the poor instead

of protecting them, and had thus dishonoured the sacred name of the King.—After him the Persian Otdanes fell from power: he had been governor of Central Ariana. The gentleman Cleandrus, Sitalkes and Heracon were summoned from Media, as exceptionally evil things were reported of them. The army they had equipped was destined to fight against their own King. They aroused suspicion by arriving with six hundred soldiers. His Majesty had the three Generals as well as the six hundred soldiers executed. At the same time an order went out that all hirelings who had not been recruited in Alexander's name, were to be dismissed immediately and without hesitation.

The further he penetrated into his kingdom the darker grew his look. They hardly knew him now: formerly he had been full of violence, but the cruel placidity of his face was foreign to them.

He did not ride any longer, but muffled up in his severe and magnificent robes he sat enthroned in his coach. He was followed, as Darius Codomannus and Xerxes used to be, by the executioners to whom he only needed to beckon in a quiet and gruesome fashion, to carry out his orders.

In the Pasargadaian grove they found Cyrus' grave cruelly neglected and, as became apparent soon after,

it had also been looted. This occasion was seized by the King to hold a terrible tribunal. Magi were carefully questioned and put to the rack, and everywhere suspects were arrested. No Achemaeneid could have avenged an offence with greater cruelty, for Alexander was conscious of his succession.

He who had appeared before the nation as the herald of freedom and a much-loved redeemer, was now nothing less than an affliction to them. The radiancy had vanished from his face which had grown broader and flatter; and with it had vanished his youth. The King during the few years of the Bactrian-Sogdianian and Indian expeditions, had visibly aged. He was no longer elastic and supple, but heavy and at the same time hard.—Officials fled before his approach, for he even condemned many who had not been found guilty of serious offence. Everywhere a great laxity had entered into the people's morals, while the feared ruler was making new conquests in the enchanted country. Not everyone immediately felt himself a criminal who had embezzled funds in one quarter or collected too much in another. Such practices had become general in the absence of Alexander just as they were under the present Darius Codomannus.

Lame Harpalus had however been too impudent. To entrust the public exchequer to this pleasure-loving and conceited person was an experiment on the part of Alexander which might be called thoughtless.—As the Treasurer found the eastern women too indolent, he ordered one of the highest paid cocottes from Athens to come to him; her name was Pythionice and she was a thin creature with rather piquant charm. He organized such extravagant orgies with her that her injured health could not stand it; during a specially magnificent feast she died, and they built her a monument of priceless worth. Nobody less than the cocotte Glycera was permitted to succeed her, any other one would have been too cheap. Glycera had to be worshipped as Queen from the very start, Harpalus would not have it otherwise. The feasts he gave in her honour offered even more extraordinary delights than those over which Madame Pythionice had presided, and even at the Court of the Great King there had never been such revelries. When the news of Alexander's approach to Babylon arrived, the Treasurer took to his heels, carrying off his woman Glycera, five thousand talents of gold and a three-year-old daughter whom Pythionice had borne him. First of all he went in the direction of the Ionian shore.

He employed his magnificent funds to hire soldiers, and this to the tune of six thousand men. One day he appeared with these in Athens where, at the special request of old Demosthenes he was permitted to remain temporarily. But this was only until Alexander demanded his arrest. Then they let him go, for they did not wish to have so proven an enemy of the King in prison. The jovial vagabond ended in Crete where his bosom friend, the Spartan Thibron, assassinated him, probably in order to get possession of the few talents which were left of the entire booty of his swindling trips.

It was only after his death that he really became the centre of interest, for now scandal grew so rapidly around his name that he could not have wished for anything better. Athens was having one of its great affairs, even Demosthenes being accused on this occasion. The dignified old fox gained nothing by dragging his children before the tribunal and weeping over them in his attempt to move the hearts of the people: They insisted that he whose voice had for so many decades trembled with civic virtue, had been bribed by the adventurer Harpalus; why should he otherwise have sponsored the reception of the defrauder within the walls of Athens in so enthusiastic a manner—or in any case with an in-

apposite geniality which was bound to cause the most unfortunate political consequences. His entire repertory of grand gestures, oaths and weeping-fits no longer availed the practised old wizard, and he was thrown into prison without further ado, although on the next day he was allowed to make his escape. Many others were arrested with him; there were all kinds of highly esteemed gentlemen. The mobs in the streets of Babylon had not enjoyed such a sensation for a very long time, and the dashing treasurer earned their gratitude posthumously.

In Susa Alexander rejoined Hephaestion and his division. He at once requested the General to come to him for a private audience.

Hephaestion was conducted to the King's private Cabinet and not to the official reception hall. Alexander held out his hand to him in a more affectionate way than he had done for a long time. The man who had been neglected for many months, blushed slightly, so grateful and pleased was he. He bowed with a smile showing his beautiful teeth, and in the middle of his bow he said in a pleasantly veiled tone: "It is nice that you still found time for me—" Above him the King, already on edge, turned away his face: "Yes indeed, I am rather busy— Do be seated," he said hastily, as



Hephaestion stood before him with a disappointed look.

"I am preparing a few festivities which are of paramount importance politically," said Alexander as he paced up and down in an agitated manner. And suddenly, his hand raised to his forehead, he stood still as if overtired: "Forgive me if I speak to you concerning public matters instead of your own affairs which are perhaps of greater interest to you—" He hesitated, but continued at once:

"Ten thousand Greek and Macedonian soldiers shall marry ten thousand Persian women. I will pay the trousseau for every one of them and also a talent of silver. I will give the young couples an unusual banquet, for on the same day I too will marry again, and with greater dignity than the first time."

Hephaestion looked up, his eyes full of sombre amazement. The man in the centre of the room, his King, cried boastfully, raising his arm:

"Her Highness, Princess Stateira, the eldest daughter of the Great King and Achaemeneid, Darius Codomannus, has already started from Babylon. With her comes her younger daughter, Princess Drypetis, whom I had intended for you!"

He gripped his friend by the shoulder, but the latter

turned away with a hard look. "Leave me out of the game!" he pleaded, at once in a warning and beseeching tone.

Only now was he given an opportunity to hear Alexander's new voice which thundered, although not as enthusiastically as in the battle, rather it was hard, cutting, angry. "Have you then forgotten everything?" he yelled at him from under a furiously lowered brow. And then raising himself to his full height like a tyrant, and with a gesture at once domineering and diffident:

"The wedding!! The goal—"

He let fall his arm, standing with his hands hanging down like a man who has been disgraced and has met with a disaster. For one moment Hephaestion thought: "He does not look like a man who is preparing for a wedding—." It is true that he immediately afterwards regretted this thought.

Meanwhile Alexander had taken refuge in a militarily strident tone of voice: "I am not in the habit of discussing my orders," Hephaestion heard this strange voice say, and it reminded him of Philip's. "You are dismissed for the present—"

Hephaestion, who had already reached the door, bowed in silence. In parting, his eyes which were bathed

in tears, gazed despairingly at the disfigured countenance of his friend.

At the head of the table sat the King enthroned beside his veiled bride whose eyes looked out sadly from under gold and silver embroidered veils, like those of an astonished animal. The next couple were Hephaestion and his Drypetis, whose eyes are as solemn and devoid of understanding as those of her sister; then, in a long and festive row all the other Macedonian and Greek Generals, princes and officials with their Asiatic ladies. Although the jesters belched, jumped about, turned somersaults, and the slaves rushed to and fro with wines and delicacies, the atmosphere did not become very hearty. An often painful silence was broken most inappropriately and oddly by toasts and humorous speeches. No one could laugh at the mountebanks, or only in a way that did not sound really natural. The men ate and drank heavily so as not to have to speak with their new wives, whose names they hardly knew. They had now arrived at the dessert; there were sugared grasshoppers fixed on sticks, dates, pears, pomegranates and almond cakes.

Hephaestion's reproachful silence and the vacant

stare of the muffled-up king's daughter had become unbearable to Alexander. He jumped up and beckoned to Bagoas to follow him. He hurriedly made his excuses to Stateira who smiled blandly and ceremoniously under her costly wrap.

Outside night was luring him with its odours and noises. There were only drunk people about, and their shouts mingled with snappy, wailing and tootling music.

Alexander fled past places where snake-tamers were showing their art and Greek rhapsodists recited their marvellous fables. Girl dancers with brownish skins wriggled their well-trained bodies, while fat men drank their health squatting on the ground and helping themselves to meat they took out of frying-pans with their hands; other soldiers pushed their way to other women; but the King hurried along so as not to witness the spectacle of couples locked in one another's arms sinking to the ground.

They were all exceedingly merry, for his Majesty had granted the troops the highest privileges: besides the talent of silver and the trousseau each young bridegroom had settled for him on presentation of his bill, all the debts he had incurred during the entire expedition. Throughout the day tables were fixed up in un-

occupied places where a man might call for his gold pieces. Evening followed, with a great celebration for the people and sumptuous feasting, the evening that was to end in the wedding night of the ten thousand. Tragic and comic theatrical performances had been arranged for the next few days, and it was said that troops had arrived from Athens.

Alexander hastened past carousing and bawling groups as he sought to reach the open spaces; he was followed like a nimble shadow by Bagoas. The King ran on, fearful though not understanding why. It seemed to him there was no escape now. Soon he stopped, thinking he would sink into the ground; he closed his eyes and smelt the air.

He smelt the air which was saturated with many different odours. There was an odour of wine, of roast meat, of the juice of ripe and cracked fruit; also of sweat, of blood and vomiting.

He drew Bagoas closer to him: "*What is this smell?*" And he closed his eyes as if benumbed. "I am afraid," the unconquerable Alexander whispered. "It was never as bad as this on the battle field. He sniffed again, with a pained look such as one finds in a person giving himself up to a vice which he knows to be

unwholesome. Alexander, leaning with the entire weight of his body on the child who stood it tenaciously, whispered with lips growing paralyzed with horror: "To-night ten thousand new men are being begotten—the world will be continued."

## II

In the city of Opis the large army route divides itself east and west, leading to the western countries and to Media.

On the march of the great army from Susa to Babylon a halt of several days was ordered; the camp was pitched outside the town, while Alexander and his *entourage*, occupied the royal castle. This circumstance painfully aggravated a depression which had made itself felt in the army for some months past. The horrors they had endured in the Gedrosian desert had not been forgotten, and no feast-day, however merry, could wipe out their memory. The attitude of their King hurt them, they considered it ungrateful. They had accustomed themselves to his wearing Persian clothing, and also to the oriental ceremonial he had introduced.

Nevertheless it offended them that he became more and more friendly with Asiastic dignitaries and officers, while his relations with the Macedonians had cooled off. "He is tired of us," they grumbled as they sat around the fire in the evening. "Since he has his Persian princes, he feels like an Achaemeneid. He is ungrateful like his father, who always loved Athens more than Macedonia. This one loves Asia more than Macedonia and Athens put together. He apes the embroidered dress of Asia and sleeps with his Babylonian half-caste. As for us, he rejects us when he has got everything he wants out of us." They muttered bitter words into their beards. When the King summoned the army to a mass meeting, they assembled in a recalcitrant mood. They murmured rebelliously as Alexander, arrayed in his most magnificent garment and surrounded by Persian military, stepped onto the platform.

On his podium he sensed the hostility they breathed, nevertheless he spoke with a cool amiability in which there was a tinge of arrogance. He even spoke a trifle nasally. "My beloved people," he said with an alien smile, "what I have to tell you is not pleasant news. I know that many of you are fatigued, worn out and exhausted." His audience below him murmured dolefully, while the smile of their strange lord grew more



remote. "It has been my custom to allow the veterans and incapacitated soldiers to settle in the newly established cities. You, my beloved, shall fare better than that! I know you long for no place—more than for home. My friends and veterans, you shall see Macedonia again!" He spread out his arms in a theatrical manner, while his voice quivered unnaturally. "As a token of my gratitude for all you have done and suffered, I dismiss you to your homes where you are to be well provided for!"

At this an uproar started. He was still in an attitude of dignity and benevolence when those down below began shrieking with rage. For a few seconds he listened, not horrified, but surprised, to their curses, accusations and imprecations. "Now we know what you really are, we knew this was coming! He sends us home after he has sucked all the strength out of us! For what have we shed our blood?" they asked menacingly. "So that you may strut about in your conceit, you Persian peacock! And throw us down!—What are we to do at home? With what are we to work, since you have left us no strength? Eh!—Eh?" they asked again and again, fiercely shaking their beards and those fists which they claimed had lost their strength.

Alexander's voice, rattling with fury, drove into

their poor, unorganized uproar like a flash of lightning. "Quiet!" he thundered, but they would not be quiet. Then he jumped into their midst.

He jumped unarmed from his platform; a timid circle made way for him, his eyes made them afraid. He seized a number of those who had screamed particularly loudly: "This one shall be executed, and this one and this one!" he snorted, shaking each one in turn. Now they were quiet. Back on his platform he stretched his arm, threw his head back and screamed across at them.

No one had ever heard him speak like this, the Macedonian soldiers lowered their brows against the impact of his terrific speech, as one does against a tornado. In a voice which was radiant with conceit he told them the unparalleled story of his life. Was this the spectacle in which they had participated? For what purpose were they his tools, however imperfect and weak?

"I have conquered the world," he shouted triumphantly, which frightened them so that they lowered their heads still further.

"And you, my creatures, you dare to oppose me?"

He reminded them of what they had once been. His

father had made simple soldiers of them when they were nothing but poor, ragged shepherds, but he had transformed them from simple soldiers into masters of the Continent. "For whom have I fought, if not for you?" he suddenly declaimed, when his arrogance had spent itself. *They* had had the spoils of his victories, he only an exhausting anxiety for the next one. They slept better than he did, they enjoyed women, they ate with a better appetite. He did everything for them; and how did they thank him? "Let him appear before me!" he demanded almost in tears, "who can show more wounds than his King! I have been wounded by the missiles of every nation!" He tore open his magnificent garment so that they might see his scarred chest.

Now that he had made them mellow, he became aggressive again.

That is how things were, now they knew what they had done to him. "I have loved you as my own sons!" he cried again, spreading out his arms; and everybody was sobbing. "Those among you who were incapacitated in my service I desired to send back laden with honours, to those homes which I thought you loved and yearned to see again. Now go, everyone of

you!—*You are dismissed!*” he cried, stamping his foot, “Get out of my sight! You are Alexander’s soldiers no longer!”

As he turned to go, he sneered and, looking back over his shoulder, with his train thrown over his shoulder: “Vaunt yourselves at home that you deserted your King in distant lands! Doubtless it will be to your honour if from now on I surround myself with an Asiatic body-guard and Persian officers! Posterity will praise you for this!”

He hurried away, angrily throwing his train over his shoulder; the veins on his brow were swollen with rage. A few of the officers followed him in alarm.

He shut himself up in his cabinet, giving strict injunctions that no one was to be admitted.

Behind him he left absolute helplessness. The army was in a panic, that army that had conquered India, Persia and Egypt. Orators gesticulated from small platforms, but no one listened to them. One man suggested that the troops return home in close formation; another that they ask the King’s pardon; a third proposed attacking Alexander in his castle as an enemy, conquering him and making him a prisoner.

In the meantime there arrived from the King’s cabinet news which spread alarm. Alexander was dic-

tating his ruthless orders to Bagoas, and these were passed on to the generals and the army.

The army was informed that they were to consider themselves as definitely dismissed. If they did not vacate their quarters within forty-eight hours, the King would advance against them with a Persian company.—Orders were given to the hastily formed Asiatic body-guard who were responsible for the personal safety of his Majesty, to see to it that all the highest offices were filled by Persians; this applied also to the rank of General, for these performed the most secret service in the King's *entourage*; they were named the King's relations and were also granted the privilege of being allowed to kiss the crowned head.

No Greek-speaking person was admitted to the royal apartments, not even Hephaestion; the ante-room was thronged with Persian dignitaries. The King received a few of them in his cabinet which he never left for a second. He paced to and fro, dictating all the time and so rapidly that little Bagoas could hardly scribble it all down. Alexander's face had the rigid seriousness of a mask, it seemed insensible to any human emotion. It was reported that Hephaestion had been waiting for several hours, but Alexander shook his head and waved decliningly—suddenly He-

phaestion stood before him without his permission.

Alexander gazed at him with a look of strange surprise. Hephaestion cried in a warning and fearful voice: "The army is weeping!" It was seen that tears were running down his face also. "They have all assembled in front of your castle! They are all weeping! They ask your pardon!" Now he sobbed so violently that he had to turn away, for the tears were glistening on his cheek. Alexander stood still and, his hands on his back, stared at him from under a furiously lowered brow. "What do they care about my pardon?" he sneered, laughing into the face of the weeper. "They are afraid to-morrow they may not get anything to eat."

That was too much for Hephaestion; now he raised his hands adjuringly and said in a horrified tone: "You are sinning, Alexander! They have served you faithfully, they have made you what you are, you cannot leave them now!" Again he sobbed until he was forced to turn away. Alexander gazed at the weeper with a black, disconsolate look under his furious brow. As he resumed his walk to and fro, he said curtly through his teeth: "I must reserve all my decisions to myself. Please leave me alone."

His soldiers had to weep for twenty-four hours.

They whined outside the gates of his palace. They had discarded their weapons and smote their bared breasts in their misery. Their remorse made them willing to do anything: "We will remain without pay, Alexander! We will go wherever you send us! Only please, please allow us to remain your soldiers! What should we do without you?—Let us become your body-guard once more!" they pleaded and lamented in heartrending accents. "And do allow us also to kiss you!"

They wailed as a lover does for the woman of his desire. To be allowed to kiss him seemed to them the greatest bliss to which they could aspire. They knelt down, they strewed dust in their beards, on their heads and onto their hairy chests. They continued thus for a whole night; the following day, and yet another night, found them in the same position.

Then the portals of the palace opened before their eyes, and Alexander appeared in a flood of light. He was alone and unarmed, and his white garment was as the garment of a peace-maker. He smiled a blessing on their heads; they did not notice that his smile was cold and overtaxed, that his demeanour was calculated and artificial. They only rejoiced. They wept again, but this time for joy. They loved Alexander,



they had never loved him as much. Was he not aware of it, did it not warm his heart? Surrounded by all their affectionate love, he yet seemed to shiver. They called him their leader, their young god. They surrounded him, now they carried him shoulder-high.

At the feast of reconciliation which he gave them, he allowed those sitting next to him to kiss him. They did this rather shyly, clumsily and ostentatiously. As they laid their rough cheeks against his smooth one, he was seen to give a short laugh, it was so ticklish. After each of these laughs he closed his eyes for a second, as after a short-lived happiness.—

Politically this touching and exciting incident had changed nothing. The veterans were sent home and Craterus went as their leader. They heard that the General was to remain in Pella as Regent, while Antipater was ordered to Babylon with new troops.

The Persian officers retained the offices they had been temporarily given at the time of the rebellion.

The two new decrees which Alexander issued for Greece created general alarm.

He claimed divine honours for his person, even from the Greeks. At the same time he affronted the

nation whom he subjected to such humiliation; he even had no respect for the outward liberty he had given them. He demanded that the Greek cities should take back their political exiles and restore them to full citizenship. Both these decrees were proclaimed by the King's ambassador, Nicanor of Stageira, to the nations of Greece assembled for the feast of the Olympiad. A deep silence greeted this announcement.

Who sat on the throne in Asia, called himself a son of Zeus and dared give them orders of this kind? Were they not, to-day as ever, the freest nation on this earth? Had they not conquered Xerxes?

Nearly all the men hated him; but many a woman, many a lad had begun to love him. Many dreamt dreams about him.

Who sat on his throne in Babylon? The ambassador of the divinity who was the seven times beloved son of Zeus Amen-Rah, who was so clever that he could bring salvation to humanity. He wore a silver cloak with a long train, and a royally trimmed hat under which his face smiled graciously. It was bliss to fall at his feet, for he brought happiness. He truly fulfilled the prophecy that the Golden Age would dawn when the wild beasts became friendly.

They dreamed of him as the Greek-Asiatic divinity,

with the athletic body of the youths who loved to see him sparkling in the mysteriously sanctified apparel of Egypt, Persia and India. He was called Hermes-Osiris-Apollo-Tammuz; his resonant voice soared over the continents on giant wings.

“I rule over the seas and the firm land, the islands, the rivers and mountains. I administer the kingdom of this earth so that there may be happiness and that the prophecy might be fulfilled.

“I am the son of the god and the belovèd of the human race.

“I am the bridegroom,” his voice would sing across the countries that worshipped him, their master.

### III

Eumenes of Cardia was practically the most unpopular member of the King's *entourage*. He did not even seem to be held in respect, although it was well known that he was indispensable to Alexander as a secretary.

How he squinted and grinned,—everyone thought it repulsive. He was impertinent and at the same time

humble, and that was a mixture which was most unpopular.

Alexander himself did not find him congenial, but he could make good use of him. It was impossible to find another memory like his. Eumenes remembered everything and would remind one of it at the right moment. It is true that his flattering, hand-rubbing and crouching attitude got on one's nerves, although sometimes it was amusing, for the inferior little man invented humorous and cunning phrases to show his devotedness. One could also—and this was worth a great deal—treat him unceremoniously without his taking objection. In India the King punished his too great avarice, by a somewhat coarse joke which he permitted himself to play upon him.

At that time this lad behaved in a particularly disagreeable way. Although they all knew that he was well off, he only gave one hundred talents when the King went round in person to his nobles to collect funds for the establishment of a river-fleet,—and remarked as he gave it that he did not happen to be blessed with this world's goods.

He ought not to have behaved so shamelessly, even the King was annoyed. They thought of a cruel method

to make a fool of him: in the night his tent was set on fire by Alexander's orders, so that the entire camp might enjoy seeing the miser dash into the open with the treasures which he had kept back from public monies. The matter ended rather badly, not only because the fool of a gentleman from Cardia was nearly burned himself—this would have meant one more entertainment for the army,—but because several state papers and documents belonging to the Chancery got lost in the fire, and they were very hard to replace. Still it was a splendid triumph for all Eumenes' friends that in the pile of ashes which was all that remained of his tent, they found over a thousand talents in molten gold and silver.

It was annoying that even this incident did not ruin him. The King, who seemed to require his services to some extent, kept him at his side.

No one would have believed that Hephaestion had quarrelled seriously with this worthless fellow. Yet it came to that.

For some reason or other Hephaestion had received a present from the King, a chain which appeared to have been selected for its costliness rather than its personal appeal. Alexander's friend who was accustomed to receiving more personal gifts, was not particularly

pleased with this clumsy piece of work; but he wore it so as not to offend the donor. This chain Eumenes took as their bone of contention. It was on this wise: the favourites received the golden ornament, and the faithful workman had to content himself with a niggardly recompense. What was the use of slaving away so hard? So that the favourites should sit in bliss and glamour while, however capable one might be, one remained neglected, ugly and small.

Now the time had apparently come when a long hidden jealousy was to show itself. This outburst of a vulgar temper repelled Hephaestion, and he closed his lids. But the other continued to scold. Now what had been the achievement of certain gentlemen? he asked repeatedly and more and more insistently, as if he really and truly expected an answer.

This scene was taking place in the King's ante-room, and still Hephaestion volunteered no reply. He only grew pale, for he thought: how self-assured this creature must be to give the alarm in Alexander's immediate neighbourhood—to give the alarm against *me*, against *me*—

Meanwhile the scribe yelled in a voice which nearly broke down grotesquely in its fury. "What has been your achievement, chaste Mr. He-

phaestion. If you will not tell then *I* will—”

At this he felt the other man's fist in his face. Hephaestion hit him right in the face, on his mouth, and on his nose from which proceeded a pale stream of blood; only when Alexander's voice was heard coming from the door did he stop beating him. The King cried: “Apart! Apart!” And he seized them both by the shoulders; Hephaestion had never been treated so roughly by anybody.

Eumenes was still whimpering and rubbing his injured snout while Hephaestion looked at his repulsive hands which were still bleeding. Alexander asked sharply what had happened. As Hephaestion was arrogantly silent, the whining secretary began to lie; he told how he had rather envied the privileged General his wonderful chain and how the latter had at once become rude.—“But that is a way these officers have,” sobbed the person who had had a beating and whose nostrils were still bleeding.

“And Mr. Hephaestion is the most brutal of them all—”

With a cutting amiability Alexander said to Eumenes:

“Be calm, my child, you will get the same chain as the general. You have richly deserved it.” While the



thus honoured gentleman was still bending over the royal hand and sobbing, Alexander half-turned to Hephaestion, but avoiding the sombre, frightened look which his friend bestowed on him, exclaimed: "I must ask you not to pick quarrels with my officials. You thereby compromise me as well as yourself." He threw back his head and quickly departed. He was followed by a scraping and bowing scribe.

Hephaestion, who desired to hold back the King with a gesture that showed how desperate he still was, dropped his hand. At the same time first his face fell forward and then the upper part of his body, as if overcome by a sudden weakness.—

This incident occurred a few days before the arrival of the troops and the court in Ecbatana.

Hephaestion asked to be excused at the official functions at Ecbatana; Alexander usually attended them accompanied by little Bagoas. It was later said of some of the banquets that they were most luxurious and riotous orgies, in particular was this true of the great supper of the fat satrap, Atropates, whose legendary fame passed into history. On the occasion of this most voluptuous feast Alexander showed the

wildest exuberance of spirit; he drank furiously, and his licentiousness in another direction was also observed. It so happened that the doctors on this very evening first began to take Hephaestion's puzzling illness seriously. His fever would not diminish; on the contrary, the patient was nearly always found by them in an unconscious and fantastically rambling state.

The King was appropriately informed of the General's condition as he was returning from the Satrap's amusing party early the following morning. Heavily intoxicated, he muttered and motioned the news-bearer away. Glaucias, the conscientious and faithful doctor—for it was he—withdrew in alarm from the presence of the tottering Alexander.

The following morning the King was paying visits, first to one of the Persian noblemen, and then also to his sick friend. As this was the first day of the feast of Dionysius, which was marked by important sacrificial ceremonies, he could only stay a few minutes. Hephaestion did not recognize him; the eyes of the sick man, incapable of expressing anything but great fear, did glance at him, but without actually seeing him. Thus Alexander was glad to be able to get away quickly; he hastily promised Glaucias, the doctor, a reward for his devoted services and then hurried to

the feast, where the people were already asking for him.

To the people, who cheered mechanically, he showed his dead smile, and his most imposing gesture which had grown stiff: the women observed that he had grown fatter, but he had also increased in dignity. His eyes which had grown larger under his highly arched brows, lacked the radiance that had been wont to conquer; although even now they ruled and enchanted *with a dead and mysterious penetration*. It was his mouth in particular which had become contorted; it was not so very long ago that this mouth had looked like that of a child. Now it was bluish and flabby, and at the same time greedy. Many thought his mouth repellent, although others again thought it particularly attractive.

Innumerable women who lined the streets to see the King pass by, discussed all the details of his degenerate face with one another. One of them asked her neighbour: "What will his mother say when he returns to Macedonia? He went from her as an unspoilt and radiant young man, and now he returns tired-out and degenerate." Some of them laughed at this, others were silent.

Meanwhile Alexander, seated in festive garment on

his chariot drawn by white animals, and wearing the tiara on his brow, sent his dead smile incessantly over the cheering crowds.

The sacrifices were followed by great contests and theatrical performances, and Alexander seemed everywhere present in his sumptuous array. His face stiffly encircled by precious stones was seen again and again, majestic and fatigued, wherever the people had collected to shout and cheer; and at his side was always the painted and cunning visage of the little half-caste whom they already called the "Queen."

The rumour that Hephaestion was sick, passed. Would the King then have appeared in public? He would surely have sat by his couch if his friend had been ill, instead of being in the box with the half-caste—Alexander distributed wreaths of honour, bowed, smiled and expressed his thanks. In the evening he drank heavily with the princes and generals, with the cocottes, actors, and newly arrived traders, either in the villas of the rich or in his own palace.

It was on the last day of the Dionysian feast, and during the contest of the half-grown boys when Glaucias, the doctor, called on the King in the stadium. It was observed how the doctor with anxious mien whispered something in the King's ear; how the latter, his

eyes fixed with a dead eagerness on the wrestling boys, waved him off with an irritated gesture. The greybeard shook his head and departed, only to return again at the end of an hour. The people saw how he whispered still more insistently. At last the King rose.

He arrived too late. Hephaestion's patient and gentle eyes had already closed. As the King entered the draped apartment, weeping women and men with a heavy countenance were leaving it. After a very long time Alexander once again found himself alone with his friend Hephaestion.

It was only Alexander who was changed; Hephaestion's calm face was as a bright light in a white glimmer, even his hands radiated a comforting brightness. Why had Alexander not remembered how kind this friend was, how companionable and gentle? At last he dared address him once more.

He knelt down by his couch, and in a quavering voice questioned the beloved: "You have forgotten that stupid affair with Eumenes the other day, haven't you?—You really have?" he asked once again, seeing his friend did not answer.

It was only when Hephaestion continued his silence despite the King's more and more pressing questions

that the latter began to guess, and finally to understand. Then a profound silence fell upon the room. There was a great emptiness which swallowed up every sound and every colour, and engulfed every sign of life—even tears were not allowed to flow: King Alexander sat in the midst of a solitude which encircled him like a wall.

In order to break it, he began to scream. He threw out his arms and screamed, and screamed, and screamed. Court attendants and military came hurrying in, doctors bent over the patient, ladies pressed their handkerchiefs to their eyes. The King had thrown himself across the corpse and roared, foaming at his wide-open mouth. They tried to hold him, but he resisted with all his might, while his eyes were bleeding.

No mortal could ever have screamed in this fashion, there was no mourning in that cry, no human pain, but rather a loneliness, a despair, such as *we* never experience, and only the gods in their despair can realize.

Above the dead and beautifully becalmed countenance of his peaceable favourite there wobbled the tragic mask of Alexander's distorted face with its gaping mouth, and eyes from which flowed blood, and

no tears. One night passed, then a day, then another night, and yet another day. The mourner did not sleep, did not eat, did not drink. He would not close his eyes which had seen nothing for some time. His screams changed to moans, his moans to a rattle; but his disconsolate hands moved with ghastly persistence over the face, hair, hands and body of the dead man.

The comforting words his confidants would venture to utter, did not seem to reach him. It was already rumoured that he had lost his reason; nothing seemed to penetrate and nothing to affect him now. There seemed to be nothing left for him but to become resigned to the fate which had fallen upon him.

After three days and three nights his strength diminished, and at last they found him asleep. Then they lifted him off the corpse over which he was still lying, and laid him on his couch. He slept for forty-eight hours on end.

When he awoke, he was a different man. He no longer complained, he commanded. It was as if he had to avenge Hephaestion's death on the whole of the human race. His instructions were brief, radical and terrible.

What incensed everyone most of all was that Alexander had ordered Glaucias, the doctor, to be nailed



to the cross. The King would not even admit him when he pleaded for mercy; his life, he stated, was played out, since he had not been able to save that of the favourite of the gods. In all the temples the magi were ordered to put out the fires, just as if the monarch himself had died. Hephaestion's name was only allowed to be mentioned as that of a demi-god—and under penalty of death, proclaimed the King. Dancing and singing were forbidden for weeks throughout the entire realm from furthest India to Macedonia. The walls of the surrounding castles were scraped, donkeys shorn, and the horses' tails cut short.

The King arranged for a most strict supervision of all these decrees so that they were punctually carried out; and anyone who was found singing was put to the rack. In the meantime he himself with the assistance of architects designed the funeral pyre which was to be erected for Hephaestion in Babylon. A hundred thousand talents were to be expended on its adornment, and a similar sum on the funeral celebrations, contests and other ceremonies. General Perdicas was entrusted with the leadership of the funeral procession.

Alexander with the greater part of the army took the road to Babylon across the mountains which were

inhabited by the Cossaïans. They were a stubborn, but harmless mountain people, of whom he had resolved to make an example by his chastisement. All men capable of fighting were murdered, and the women, children and old men sold as slaves.

## IV

Alexander now experienced a new sensation: it was that of fear. Accustomed to live out every adventure to its utmost limits, he gave himself up also to this experience as if intoxicated. Around him the world changed in a spookish fashion. From every tree, every human face, and the entire country in its ghastly distortion there grinned at him the certainty of his death and the realization that everything had been in vain and his gigantic experiment had failed.

Sinister prophecies which he had once despised and swept aside or interpreted in a political way, now confused and alarmed him. The same initiate who had presaged Hephaestion's death, now announced that the King's was not far off. He wrote this to one of the officers who had made enquiries, stating that the liver of the sacrificial animal had been without a lobe.

Everything was ghastly, but the most ghastly thing of all was that he had to go to Babylon. Elsewhere indeed the clouds were drifting only to mock at him, the water was his enemy, as well as the rough earth, the rustling foliage,—in short, all nature which had rebelled against him. But in Babylon, the danger had increased beyond recall; there it lurked in the grimaces of the bearded bull-fighters, in the mirrored depth of the black walls, in the clever, mysterious eyes of the magi.

Moreover, the Chaldaeans had warned him not to enter the city. Political motives, it was suspected, were at the back of this warning, the old men were perhaps interested in delaying, if not frustrating the arrival of the King, for how had they administered the funds which had been entrusted to them for the renovation of the Bel-Marduc temple?—Alexander sought to treat them in a cool and arrogant manner as they approached on their little white donkeys with red-painted ears and tails; they came to tell him that his entry into Babylon was not advisable, for the gods did not welcome him. The King shrugged his shoulders and sent word to the old men that his entry had been definitely decided upon. They retorted: then he should at all events not select the eastern approach, as

it was particularly dangerous. He replied defiantly that he would select the approach that was most convenient.

His reply sounded cock-sure and brazen; but the heart of him who dictated it trembled with a fear that he himself did not understand.—The little old men rode off shaking their heads. It happened that on the very same day they were found murdered, which caused a panic among the entire population. Alexander followed up this sanguinary act with great severity, but did not succeed in discovering its author.

Thus the reception which had been prepared for him was distinctly cool: Alexander was accused of participating in this blood-thirsty deed which was bound to put the entire city out of favour with the gods.

By the portals of the palace Roxane was awaiting him, sterner and more highly strung than ever; she was surrounded by her armed ladies who were covered with fantastic trimmings such as had not been seen since the wedding: their hair was powdered a golden green, on their brow was an oblong jewel of an evil violet colour;—their tight-fitting garments, made as with silver scales, jingled with jewels, snake belts and hard, flashy ornaments. She put out her

hand; while he kissed it, she gazed beyond him with an icy look. He said timidly: "I am happy to see you again." She replied sharply: "I too, my dear, am happy. How fares the Princess Stateira?"

Her impertinence disconcerted him. She took advantage of his sudden silence to enquire with icy politeness: "And how is your friend Hephaestion?" As he reproachfully said nothing, not knowing where to look, for his eyes were filling with tears, she suddenly remembered and, her eyes shining darkly, she said ostentatiously: "Oh, I forgot, of course he is dead."

Inside embassies were waiting; all through the following days deputations were announced of persons wishing to lodge a complaint or offer their congratulations on some occasion or another, and of those who brought presents or were expecting to receive them. There were ambassadors from the Hellenic countries, also Macedonians. Some complained of Olympias, others of Antipater. These two were constantly at war with one another, and the court was hell. The Queen-Mother meddled in everything, nothing would she have as the Regent had said it was to be done. In all this she incessantly plead the will of her son from whom she said she had received mysterious commis-

sions. Antipater on the other hand, who was a pedantic and headstrong old man, claimed in almost all these matters to have received special instructions in Philip's life-time.

There came Etruscan and Carthagenian deputies, Lybians, Iberians and European Scythians, Celts and Ethiopians, and also various Italians. They all brought compliments from their masters, and special offerings: golden wreaths, state robes, tame beasts of prey, and baskets filled with extraordinary delicacies. The messengers touched the ground in front of the throne with their foreheads saying that Alexander was the greatest of all mortals, the son of the divinity, and ruler of the universe. Seated under the dais, he thanked them with a proud inclination of his head.

While the embassies were present, he maintained his rigid dignity. His broad, painted face in which the eyes under their dark lids seemed almost closed, had a slack and fatigued look, although at the same time full of an impregnable and tyrannical self-realization.

The truth was that there was nothing but fear behind this mask. Hardly had the embassies, delegations and petitioners left him to himself, than he or-

dered the magi to come to him, so that he might inquire after the result of the many sacrifices that had been offered.

The future could be told by *everything*, if only one knew the right methods. Everything assumed meaning, in everything could one divine and expound the mysterious intention of the divinities: in the flight of birds, particularly that of storks; in the drifting of the clouds, the rise and fall of mists, the rays of a diamond, the inside of a flower, but more especially in dreams. The restless apparitions of his dreams the King would remember with a fearful precision. If the dream had anything to do with Hephaestion, he was happy; then everything looked as if it might still turn out well.

Everything was *bound* to turn out well, for his plans were vast. Not nearly the whole universe had been conquered. But it had to be conquered in its entirety, for it was a question of knowing everything. Only he who has conquered everything, can know all.

The most important plan was that of the circumnavigation of Arabia. The quarrelsome peoples living on the shores of the enormous peninsula had to be conquered and this country made a part of the world kingdom.



According to reports which had reached him, there were in Arabia rare and precious spices, incense and myrrh, spikenard and cinnamon. As regards the gods, only two were worshipped, Uranus and Dionysius, the latter more especially in virtue of the triumphant expedition he had led to India, which was still fresh in their memories. Alexander, who had gone further than Dionysius, explained briefly and curtly to some of the Arabian envoys that he considered it fitting that he should be the third Arabian divinity to be worshipped.

He worked feverishly, and conferred with ships' architects, military and scholars. The commission for the building of the new fleet was given to Phœnicia. Anyone who could contribute new information regarding conditions and past experiences in the Arabian countries, was received, listened to and rewarded by Alexander.

Meanwhile the army too, had to be increased, for they were to make war against various nations, who were still too vainglorious. In Italy there seemed to be a number of persons who were opposed to world-monarchy, and they had to be humbled. Above all, there was Carthage, the only important financial power of the civilized world besides their own. Since

he had succeeded in taking Tyre, the opulent mother-town of Carthage, her puffed-up daughter would also have to fall.

He sat there amid all his vast plans and calculations; at night he hardly slept, he worked incessantly, at intervals offering sacrifices and receiving soothsayers. He did not dare to go out; he was afraid of the sickly stink of the lanes which had exhausted him to such a degree on a previous occasion; he was also afraid of being assassinated.

Toward morning he made Bagoas give him the sleeping-draught which only the artful half-caste knew how to prepare. Alexander would fall asleep thinking:

“So this is the last one I have left. Really the last one.”

After weeks of fanatical and embittered labour he was seized with an unrest which drove him away from his papers. Suddenly he could no longer stand the atmosphere of Babylon. “It is poisonous through and through,” he declared with a sudden hysterical loathing.

As the fleet was not yet ready for the great expedi-

tion into Arabia, he decided in the meantime to take a smaller expedition down the Euphrates to the Pal-lacopas Canal, of which he had been told that it was to be reconstructed.

The stagnant water stank and was musty, and the officers who accompanied him felt sick. Alexander too, seemed to be taken with a fever, but he insisted on going out to the lakes which were connected with the Canal and led right into Arabia. There he suddenly decided to build a town, the thirty-seventh Alexandria. He sent Greek soldiers to settle there. "Now I have come to know yet another region," he observed with pained satisfaction, as they set out on the return journey.

No district had ever been as ugly as this. The water of the canal was reflected an oily violet, and on its unappetizingly smooth surface floated garbage, dead animals and all kinds of greenish slime. How sulphurous the sky hung over their heads. It was oppressively sultry, and the sun was hidden. If only there would be a thunderstorm! But the wind which whirled past them, brought no refreshment, it had a horrid smell and was hot.

It was also malicious, for as Alexander was dreaming with a rigid and over-tired expression, it came and

tore his hat from his head: it was adorned with the diadem. The hat fell off, while the diadem got entangled in the branches of a bush that hung over the reflecting water.

A sailor eager to retrieve it, threw off his clothes and jumped into the water which did not look exactly enticing. He caught hold of the treasure and, in order not to risk losing it while he was swimming, he put it round his thick head. This act meant the worst that could possibly happen: the emblem of royal majesty on the brow of a stranger who was in addition a very common man. He did not hear how those in the ship gave a little shout. The poor fellow, as he handed over the piece of jewelry with a grin and a clumsy bow, did not realize what was happening when he suddenly felt himself seized from behind and put in chains. The Captain suggested killing him. Alexander nodded. He averted his glance in disgust when the executioners collared him.

In Babylon there awaited him festivities which a number of important gentlemen had organized for Admiral Nearchus whose departure for Arabia was imminent. Alexander was to take part in these festivities, if only out of courtesy toward the Admiral. In the end he even enjoyed them.

All sorts of interesting news had trickled through about a small inland fleet which was exploring the mouth of the Euphrates: they had discovered two islands south of the estuary, in the Persian Gulf, both of which were small, thickly wooded, and inhabited by peace-loving, dark-skinned people who worshipped the goddess Artemis. One was called Icarus, the other Tylus.

The news of this not very important find appeared strangely to excite the King. "So there are still islands, races, regions which I do not know," he said in torment. Nor was he satisfied until he knew every detail about the vegetation, the water conditions and the climate of both islands.

At the banquets which succeeded each other in ever greater voluptuousness, he was seen to be over-excited in his mirth, which would sometimes cease in an alarmingly sudden manner. A few seconds before he would be laughing uproariously, then suddenly he subsided, his eyes growing dim. On the occasion of the last of these carousals which was under the special patronage of Roxane, it became expedient for Alexander to exchange at least a few official words with his first wife.

"I hear that Princess Stateira is expecting a son by

you," said Roxane with her horrible politeness, as she tasted the wine for him. Alexander, not knowing what reply he should make, took the cup. While he was drinking, she watched him with her blackish green look.

In the day-time the King was much occupied, for he had to inspect the newly recruited troops. For hours he would have them march past him, these young people who were perhaps even to die for his glory. "*For my predestined glory,*" he said grimly as he inspected them.

They were strong youths of different races: Macedonians, Persians, Greeks, Egyptians, and also Indians; their skin was fair and dark, their hair straight or curly, their limbs sturdy or delicate; but for Alexander they all had the same shy and respectful glance in which devotion was mingled with dread. One does not look in this fearful and apathetic way at human beings, no, only at idols, which are incapable of feeling joy or sorrow, who are powerful and nothing else.

On one of these mornings there occurred an incident unsurpassed in its loathsomeness and horror, and which more than any other evil signs threw the

King and his *entourage* into a fear bordering on panic.

In an interval between inspections the King had gone to the reservoir in the park accompanied by a few of his officers, for a little relaxation. On the throne he had left his royal cloak, his diadem and his embellished sword. When they returned, a stranger was sitting on his chair. They grew pale in front of such impertinence, for the stranger had also donned Alexander's cloak, and put his diadem on his head, while in his fleshless hands he held Alexander's sword.

They drew closer and saw that he had golden-brown, wandering eyes, and a melancholy mouth which could do nothing but babble, while his matted hair hung down over an angular forehead. It was Arrhidaeus who had been given up as lost.

Alexander rebuked him in a raucous voice: "What are you doing here?" The creature on the throne sneered as if he had always been watching his brother, had always seen him and wished to ape him; "I am the King of Asia."

To the affrighted officers he really seemed to be what he said, a caricature of their King. They kicked



him off the dais, but Alexander motioned that they were not to beat him. He had grown calmer.

"That is the spook before the end," he said softly.

## V

The river whose upward course they were following, grew more and more dangerous. Ten sombre-eyed oarsmen were groaning, even though their efforts did not advance the boats. Rapids and shoals, driving timber, and even monsters hindered their progress. All kinds of reptiles conglomerated into ugly balls; Alexander from the bow of the ship stuck his lance into them. But immediately after crocodiles would raise their alarming heads.

It was the Euphrates they were ascending. They wished to reach its source; but for what reason? Alexander pondered over this with puckered brow, as he fought with the reptiles and malicious spiky fishes.

A few friends were with him in the boat, Hephaestion, Philotas, Clitus and also a few boys; among them he recognized the young blond. He missed his

old faithful friends; where, for instance, was Parmenion?

Hardly had this thought entered his mind—he was still puzzling over the whereabouts of the old man—when right in front of his eyes Philotas dissolved into space, uttering a mournful little cry. He was gone, had disappeared with a low moan; immediately after him the young blond evaporated. Alexander could do nothing but stare fixedly at the point where they had vanished. Had the crocodiles and scale-winged monsters, which shook their puffed-up bodies over the edge of the boat, perhaps devoured them with mysterious snappings of the jaws.

All around them the scene grew wilder; rocky mountains overshadowed the river, the current too, increased, and with it the groans of the oarsmen. Trees and grass had long since vanished, and in their place there was nothing but a cleft waste. Birds of prey circled maliciously and silently over the tops of the mountains, while in the chasms blackish little animals slunk around; “Probably hyenas,” thought Alexander suspiciously.

And now it was the oarsmen who suddenly disappeared with moans and a growl that was more

angry than complaining. Alexander, Clitus and Hephaestion jumped onto the shore. They decided to continue their journey on foot.

As they were making their way through thorny bushes and crumbling stone crusts, Alexander was thinking furiously. He did not know what he was seeking. His face was bleeding, and his friends' faces too, had been hurt. They did not complain or ask whither they were bound. Silently and bleeding from their wounds they followed their King.

The dragons became more and more unbearable, they had to slay them right and left. There were among them dragons that spat fire, others whose breath had a poisonous stink. They came howling out from behind rocks, some were even seen flying in the air; others again, most abominable of all, crawled on the ground where they left a slimy trail.

The three silent heroes fought with sword and hatchet. If one of them felt like falling, the other held him silently, but consolingly with a firm grip.—*"Where am I taking them?"* Alexander said to himself, suddenly realizing the seriousness of the situation.

They could still see the bed of the Euphrates narrowing between the rocks. They realized that they

were nearly at its source. To discover this source now seemed to them of paramount importance. They hunted for it with their backs bent. When they rose up, they were standing in front of a high, black, shining wall which occupied the entire width of the legion and of which the end was invisible.

Then Alexander knew what he had been seeking. He turned to make a solemn speech.

He spoke as to an army, with sweeping and majestically dominating movements of his arms. Clitus and Hephaestion, who had respectfully lowered their bleeding faces, were listening to their Commander. He cried: "Macedonians! Hellenes! It is to your honour, my troops, that you have followed me up to this point! History will praise you as well as me! Even the fame of great Cyrus will be as nothing compared to ours. *No one* has ever reached this point, not one of the kings of Asia or Europe." In his triumph he raised himself to his full height, and his eyes shone. "But do you know where we are? *We are at the gates of Paradise.* One last long struggle lies before us, the final one, then we have conquered *all*, then we shall know *all*. Hellenes! Men of Macedonia!" He stood with outstretched arms against the impenetrable wall as one crucified, but rejoicing. "The king-

dom of happiness and infinite bliss can only be realized upon earth when we have conquered the heavenly hosts, our stoutest adversaries, the angels. Only then, my friends, only *then!*” After a pause he added, his voice expressing something like fear, exhaustion and regret: “For what have we achieved if we have not set up the kingdom of happiness and of infinite bliss upon earth?”

This question which summed up his life-sorrow, was still echoing in his friends’ ears, when he turned with sparkling sword toward the wall which mysteriously and rigidly faced him. He shouted invitingly, and Clitus and Hephaestion rushed forward with drawn weapons.

Against what enemy were they fighting this time? They did not see him, and probably for that very reason he was the most dangerous of all. They shuddered, for an ice-cold wind blew in their faces. They felt themselves growing stiff, and gradually falling. Their swords dropped out of their suddenly tired hands, those swords that had so often been victorious. They were still babbling; was it a farewell to their King? Then their lips were silent, looking very white.

When Alexander observed that they were dead, he

was frightened at his loneliness. For one moment it seemed unbearable to him. Behind the wall a metallic voice was heard: "You must be quite alone for the fight with us, Alexander, yes, quite alone. Even the last one must leave you!" The portals flew open and there was a blinding brightness which poured toward the King standing ready for the battle. He rushed forward, his weapon raised once more, obstinately resolved as never before to stake everything, to the very last.

He did not recognize the hosts which came towards him from the open portal. They seemed to be dissolved in brightness, while he alone was in the shadow. He felt an unbounded fear in face of this wild and war-like glamour. But he hastened toward it with incomparable defiance—he, the only one in the shadow, hastened toward the vindictive mass of light—; and all of a sudden he stood face to face with the leader who wore a silver armour.

The head of this graceful enemy looked stern and tender and lovely above his glistening armour. He wore no helmet, his blond hair hung loose. Now Alexander observed that he also was unarmed. He raised the palms of his hands against the charging rebels in a protective way; these palms were bare and appeal-

ing, their clear lines speaking a clever and penetratingly resonant language.

Alexander had two arrows in his fist. Before his crouching assault the bright front of his opponents yielded to him, likewise the archangel with his protective hands.

With a loud shout Alexander thrust the two arrows into the outstretched hands of his beautiful enemy.

The doctors could hardly restrain him, so vigorously did he rear. His fever rose, and he screamed and rambled and beat the air with his hands. The rumour of his having been poisoned spread; some said that Roxane had poured the wine into his glass at the last banquet.

The soldiers wished to see him; they had to be put off with lies and consoling words. The army felt they were being cheated if he died; it seemed to them like a cheap deception.

It was only on the supposition that he would live that they had followed him everywhere. What were they to do in Babylon without him?—They mistrusted everyone who offered themselves to them as ruler, even Perdiccas and Craterus. Their warmest sym-



pathy went out to Arrhidaeus who had so inexplicably reappeared; at any rate he was half-brother to the King.

When Alexander was conscious, they almost wished that his feverish ramblings would return; for matters had got very bad. They were not permitted to speak to him about affairs of state; there were disorders in India, a new scandal in Athens, and administrative troubles in Egypt, but he would not hear anything about them. He waved them off with great loathing.

On the other hand he thought with a melancholy obstinacy of things which his entire *entourage* had forgotten. "Do you remember?" he repeated again and again. "Once in Anchiale we found a verse on the King's statue which read: 'Anchiale and Tarsus were founded in one day by Sardanapal, but you, oh stranger, eat, drink and live! What man has besides, is not worth mentioning.' " He always came back to this dismal verse. "For I have founded many cities besides Anchiale. It is not worth mentioning." Closing his eyes, he turned away when they wished to contradict him. "Do let me sleep," he said weakly. "Lies—" His *entourage* were silent with dismay.

He often thought shudderingly of the Babylonian fairy tale Clitus had told him. "Altogether it was a

horrible fairytale," he claimed feverishly, "but the end especially was so bad. They tried to make us believe that this Gilgamesh carried on a silent converse with his dead friend Enicdu. In his sinful curiosity Gilgamesh asked the spirit after the welfare of his fellow spirits, and especially after the welfare of those who have no guardian,—*but who has a guardian?*—Whereupon Enicdu replied in a hollow and scornful tone: 'He shall eat the remains in the pot, the morsels thrown into the street.' You see, he said no more than 'The remains in the pot'— Oh, and who has a guardian?" Such complaints led the King to relapse into his ramblings. His look grew confused, and he babbled.

He babbled to Hephaestion: "Hephaestion, say Hephaestion, was I really sent to deceive humanity and to hurt it?—And you all?—Oh,—why then this enormous tumult of people?—" Lying over backwards, he cried, roaring by fits and starts and wailing so that it became unbearable to listen. Friends and doctors fled from his bedside in fear. Then at last the angel was allowed to enter.

He still wore the silver armour, but now it was bedecked with flowers. In his light hair too, he wore flowers which had a delightful odour. Both his hands,

which had been wounded by Alexander's arrows, he carried bandaged, which made them look thick and stiff. They were the only heavy feature of his slender figure.

"I come as a herald!" cried the angel and raised his arm as was fitting—for a herald.

"So you are Hermes?" asked impenitent Alexander, knowing full well that he was talking nonsense.

"I do not know that name," replied the angel in a bright and very kind tone.

"Amen-Rah?"

"You are ridiculous, Alexander."

As he raised his arm, his whole body jingled. His face, voice and hair seemed metallic. Only his eye and mouth were moving.

"Where are you to lead me?" groaned the King.

The angel stretched himself still more. "You will split!" screamed Alexander. "Be careful, you will split if you sparkle like that!"

The angel roared, rumbled and thundered. Alexander wept and lamented: "I thought my last hour would be quiet and peaceful. Surely there is peace as one reaches the goal. But you are so noisy that I shall go blind.—Why does Clitus avenge himself in such a horrible way?" He suddenly screamed with his arms

thrown up. "Why this, Clitus, why so awful?" It was the first time that he dared mentioned Clitus' name.

"You have sacrificed another, not yourself!" said the angel reproachfully. "You have missed the very essence of your mission. You might have realized that your last hour would not be a joyous occasion." "I am afraid," wailed he who was being dedicated in this terrible way. "I cannot see anything but circles and madness,—oh, how everything is swirling—"

"Judgment is never tender!" thundered the mandatory who was constantly transforming himself as the flame does in a storm.

"All those whom I have killed, loved me!" the sick man on the couch defended himself.

And the angel, now no longer wild, but all attention, composure and dignity: "Next time you will have got to the point where you will be able to die for those you love."

The King was silent. After a pause which was very long, he asked pleadingly: "Shall I then be allowed to set up the kingdom of perfect bliss upon earth?"

At this the angel wept. The tears he shed fell on his flowers and on his thickly bandaged hands. He bent over the dying man. The latter thought he recognized him. Surely he had seen this face before. Was it

that of the young blond? It was one of the many who had died for him.

"Now you are sparkling no longer," whispered Alexander, and his breath went more gently, he was so grateful. And the angel with the shining and weeping face: "Alexander, your young face has been ravaged, it shows ugly wrinkles. And your skin is flabby—" Alexander, who was also crying now, but with gratitude and emotion: "You are the first angel, to weep over me.—Am I condemned in spite of it?" Instead of answering him, the envoy enquired: "What was harder, victory or defeat?" "I can no longer distinguish between the two," reflected Alexander penitently. "For in my victories I already scented defeat—"

He remembered. Then Alexander, who had never told stories, began. He laid his exhausted head in the outstretched arms of the angel. The latter nodded wisely. "Speak," he encouraged him gently.

So he began with the fairy tales of Olympias which had prepared the way for his commission. "Without this commission everything would have been different," he claimed, as if to excuse himself. The angel above him indulgently rocked his head, then smiled and wept.

Philip and his coarse cleverness and unlovely death Alexander only mentioned in passing. Everything connected with Clitus, on the other hand, he described in minute detail, especially the night in which the "You are disturbing me very much!" was spoken. At this point he felt the angel's tears flow copiously. Again, when Alexander got to the night he spent with Hephaestion on the ship's deck, they flowed profusely. "No one will ever know that," said the dying Alexander proudly, his face against the angel's breast. "But even Hephaestion did not want me." "He did not dare believe that you wanted him," the angel corrected him tenderly, but firmly. "No one dared believe that, no one," complained the penitent leaning against his breast.

He went on with his confession. About Roxane who had had no son by him. "I could not give her a wedding night," he said disconsolately, yet proudly. "Not to Clitus and not to Hephaestion, and her least of all. I killed my beloved friend and for this my wife avenged herself."

The angel, who understood him, caressed him more seriously and compassionately.

The whispered confession came to an end. Alexander, whose voice was growing weaker, finally ad-

mitted the sinfulness of giving himself up to indecent Candace, and later to Bagoas, the little half-caste; also his unfaithful and unpardonable alienation from Hephaestion.

When he ceased, the angel was silent too. "And lastly, I wounded your hands," Alexander added after a long pause. He laid his mouth on the swathed hands. "Now you need answer me no more," he murmured. "You gave me my sentence before my confession. *Oh, I have failed horribly.*"

The wise angel had never heard this word from the lips of any Greek. So he realized that this man was ready. And he proclaimed to him, with greater assurance than the first time. "You will return in another form."

Whereupon Alexander, curious as the boy in the grove: "To re-establish the kingdom, angel? *To re-establish the kingdom?*"

But the outline of the angel with the bandaged hands melted away, and in vain did Alexander try to grasp him. The question which he had put with all the fervour of his life, remained unanswered in the room. And with it remained the angel's promise, his blessing.

When his friends and acquaintances returned, they



found their King in a gentler mood. He lay there calm, assuaged and devout. "Carry me into the gardens," he asked them. "I would like to see my soldiers once more."

The soldiers cried, not so much because they knew that he was going to die, but because they found him so altered and tender. He lay covered up and exhausted in his chair, bestowing his smile on them all. Some who bent over him to kiss his hand, he stroked tenderly over brow and hair.

They all marched past; the veterans, in so far as they had not been sent home, and also the young soldiers whom he had recently inspected. For all these he had a fading and distant but kind look, under that brow lowered with exhaustion. When he wished to speak to them, his voice broke down.

Smiling with difficulty, he motioned apologetically with his hand which he had never raised except to command.

Behind him the generals exchanged anxious looks. The troops waited in case there was more. But Alexander's mouth was hushed.





*This book has been set up, printed,  
and bound in the U. S. A. by the  
Vail-Ballou Press.*





5  
PT 2625 .A435 A413

Mann, Klaus, 1906-1949.

Alexander

